

Sion's Note

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Memories.

"...."

His memories were coming back.

First came the smiles of his friends.

The smiling faces of his friends who should've been dead.

Toni, Tyle, and Fahl's faces. Faces of his friends. His friends, who knew him, passed him by and left him.

Everyone was smiling at first.

But there was only silence in the end.

Because they were dead.

Every last one of them were dead.

Was it because they met with him?

Or was the world at fault?

Regardless, none of them opened their mouths anymore.

Next came the face of his mother.

He wasn't really trying to recall her face, but the image came into his mind forcibly without his intention.

She always looked tired, but would still smile whenever she looked towards him.

She was beautiful. And she smiled with a kind face that always seemed to be on the verge of crying.

But she died as well.

She couldn't even speak up anymore.

But even more memories rushed back in.

His memories circled.

From bright scenes to dark scenes.

From memories that bring him happiness to memories that he didn't want to recall.

It seemed like his memories was going up stream into the past.

New scenes were born as if he was reading a woven story backwards, turning page after page backwards.

No, they weren't new.

An ancient memory.

It was an ancient memory.

One that was terribly ancient, ancient ancient ancient ancient—

"..."

Sion scowled right then.

Silver hair that gave off an air of nobility, and golden eyes that spoke of a strong will.

He was pressing down on his chest. Because his chest hurt so much that he felt like his insides would come rushing out of his mouth if he didn't.

Headache and dizziness. An unpleasant feeling that tormented his entire body.

While enduring the «curse» that ran its course in his body, he stood alone.

He was in a narrow room located in the depths of a building in the Eris house.

After emerging from several, numerous, many doors.

After emerging from countless twisted dimensions, he arrived at the center of the Roland Empire.

He was within the center of Roland's darkness.

Once upon a time, a broken hero was sealed within.

A hero and a demon were sealed within.

But they weren't here anymore.

Because Sion absorbed the **Hero's** body.

Sion devoured the entire body of the **Fallen Dark Hero**[Asruld Roland] and absorbed it within himself.

That's why his entire body was hurting, his insides were bursting, his blood was boiling, and the intensity of the pain that was tormenting him made death seem like a better option.

It was a curse. The **Hero's** curse was eroding his body. But he won't scream. He won't even groan in pain. He only stared into the depths of darkness with his narrow gold eyes-

"..."

Right then, someone spoke behind him.

"....Hey there. You're still here?"

It was a clear, male's voice.

It was the voice of Lucile Eris.

But Sion didn't turn around. He wouldn't be able to see Lucile even if he did.

So without turning around, Sion asked,

"Am I in your away?"

Lucile smiled.

"Not really. It's just that..."

"Yes, the Hero is no longer here."

"So why did you come here?"

"Because this place is closest to the darkness."

"...."

"No, because the pain lessens a bit...if I come here. Just for a bit, the monster within me will...."

"Calm down?"

"Yes. That's why I'll escape here again."

Lucile replied to his words,

"Is it painful?"

Sion laughed.

"Of course it's painful."

And Lucile made his appearance.

Within the darkness.

Within the darkness that Sion was looking into, the head of the Eris house, Lucile Eris made his appearance.

He was an unbelievably beautiful man.

Gold hair, almost transparent white skin. His eyes were closed. They were always closed. But with those closed eyes, he was looking at everything in Roland.

So Sion spoke while looking at Lucile,

"Are you watching your sister with those eyes again?"

Lucile smiled.

"I'm always looking at you and only you — the king of this country..."

"To evaluate me?"

"Yes.....so that you won't lose to the pain."

He extended his hand and touched Sion's cheek. His hand was terribly cold. So cold that Sion felt like laughing.

Lucile stopped being a human, and Sion stepped into the darkness as well.

Out of his own will.

Even though he knew that pain and despair lay ahead, he stepped into the darkness out of his own will.

And the two of them watched each other.

So that none of them would lose to the pain and escape.

They kept watch over each other, so that even as they felt themselves becoming less and less human from the very core of their being, they won't lose to the pain

and escape — Sion felt like laughing at this idiocy, and brushed off Lucile's freezing hand.

And said,

"...I won't lose. No, if I knew I was going to lose here...."

"You would've never made an exchange with me?"

"Yes."

Sion nodded and looked at the darkness behind Lucile. The darkness was expanding without end.

The darkness was expanding slowly but surely, as if to envelop this country - no, this entire world.

It was powerful enough that Sion felt like he was being sucked in by the darkness if he stared for too long.

Lucile turned around to look at that as well.

"...."

But he didn't say anything.

He merely gazed into the darkness wordlessly and disappeared.

He didn't have a physical body.

He didn't have a real image.

And gradually, he was losing his heart.

It was being torn apart and devoured by the monster within him, and he began to lose his consciousness as a human.

Lucile tried his hardest to endure that.

No, not only Lucile — Sion was enduring the same thing. The feeling of himself separating from humans. His weak self, tormented by the curse and about to lose to the pain.

" ... "

He watched the darkness in stillness.

Stared into the depths of darkness.

And the scenes began to swirl again. He felt like it happened faster when he was here.

The scenes circled.

The scenes swirled.

Without any intent on his part, the memories came one after another.

The face of Ferris, Lucile's sister. The beautiful sister Lucile tried so hard to protect.

He tried removing her from the cogwheels of fate. He risked his life for that alone. But even Sion couldn't know whether he'd succeed or fail in the end.

But immediately, Ferris' face disappeared. Her emotionless face disappeared.

And Ryner's face replaced her.

The face of his dearest friend.

The face of the only friend he opened his heart to.

But even that face twisted and disappeared. And the pages began turning backwards again. The pages of his memories quickly went against the stream.

The darkness swirled and circled around him, and the scene that finally appeared before his eyes was no longer his own.

The memory of something that wasn't himself.

And the scene that was revealed——

"....."

But he shook his head. He thought that he shouldn't bear witness to that scene.

The scene just now was probably one of the memories of the **Fallen Dark Hero**[Asruld Roland] that he absorbed.

And he didn't have enough power to look at that scene. If he saw the **Hero's** memories and synchronized his consciousness with him, his own consciousness might be eroded by the **Hero**.

Because he didn't devour every last bit of the **Hero's** power.

So he stopped leafing through his memories. He trudged back. Everything was dark here, and darkness was abound no matter where he looked, but he turned his back to the darkness.

And moved forward.

Just after a few steps, he could feel the darkness thinning.

A sense of reality began to return to the scenery that was overwhelmed with darkness by curses and damnations.

Eventually, after he emerged from the darkness, he found himself in a normal dojo.

The dojo of the Eris house.

A huge room with a wooden floor.

The door that was closed when Sion came was now open, and he could see the garden beyond the corridor.

It was a simple garden, different from that of many other nobles.

A small pond and plain stones that surrounded it.

And the eldest daughter of the Eris house stood upon the rocks, gazing at the pond.

It was Ferris Eris.

Bewitching blond hair, and a beautiful face like that of Lucile's. Not much emotion was reflected on her face, but unlike Lucile, she was human. She had the warmth of one.

Sion smiled at that human. Just by looking at her beautiful figure, he was able to find assurance that he still belonged to this world. He let out a sigh of relief.

Ferris folded her arms while standing on the rock and asked,

"Iris. Did you find it?"

And a pretty girl who resembled a miniature version of Ferris jumped out of the pond with a splash.

It was the younger daughter, Iris Eris. She was beautiful as well. Wet, blond hair, white skin like porcelain, and energetic blue eyes.

Iris looked up at Ferris, her sister,

"Big sister, I didn't!"

She shouted.

It was a voice filled with emotion. Within the Eris siblings, she had the most amount of humanness left in her.

Ferris responded to her sister's words,

"Then keep on searching. If you can't find it, you fail."

Iris replied with tears welling up in her eyes,

"I don't want to fail!"

"Then search for it."

"Okay!"

And Iris dived into the pond again.

Ferris looked at her without any expression.

Sion walked beside her, and she turned around,

"Hmm. Sion, you came."

He nodded.

"Yes. I had some business with Lucile."

"With brother?"

"Yes."

"And, your business is finished?"

"It's finished."

"So, you want to dive in as well?"

Ferris suddenly pointed to the point, and Sion asked,

"Just what are you doing here?"

Ferris replied,

"It's a long story."

"Okay."

"Just three years ago, I thought of something brilliant."

"Hmm."

"Dangos are skewered by sticks, right?"

"Yes they are."

"So if I kept those sticks after finishing the dango,"

"Hmm."

"When I got thirty thousand of them, I'd make a boat — that was my plan."

"Huh~"

"So, I made one."

Sion was surprised,

"You mean, you got thirty thousand of those sticks?"

Ferris nodded immediately.

And Sion did some mental calculations in his head,

"Um, you thought of your plan three years ago, right?"

He asked, and she nodded.

"Yes."

"So, for three years, you ate more than twenty sticks of dango per day, right?"

Ferris looked at him with her emotionally crippled eyes,

"Is that the result you got?"

She asked, and Sion re-calculated,

"Ah, um, you'll get around thirty thousand if you eat 27~28 sticks of dango per day, I think."

"Hmm. I've eaten less than I thought."

"No, no, you've eaten too much..."

But she interrupted his words and pointed at him,

"No! Dango masters have to eat hundreds of them per day!"

She said energetically.

Sion looked at her pointed finger with a blank face,

"Saying that must've felt pretty good."

Ferris nodded just a bit happily,

"You want to say it too?"

"No, I didn't really get enough sleep, so I'm not that energetic."

"Work again? If you keep working like that, your body will break down. Just quit it and eat dango. Eat dango."

Sion laughed,

"Who does that?"

Ferris looked at the pond again and answered,

"A dango master."

"Haha. I could say the same of you — your body won't hold if you keep eating dango like that. Just recently, you lost consciousness and we had to take you to the hospital..."

"That wasn't because of dango."

"But you made Ryner worried and angry, right?"

"Uh..."

"The doctor told you to control your dango impulses and get a more balanced diet, right?"

"....Leaving that aside!"

"No, wait—"

"These two days, I've been making a ship with Iris."

And Sion turned towards Iris who didn't seem like she was surfacing anytime soon. She was swimming in the pond while wearing her dress. It had been more than three minutes, but she was still trying her hardest to dive.

"Um, Ferris. Shouldn't Iris be taking a breath anytime now..."

But Ferris ignored him and said,

"Our masterpiece that took us two days broke apart the moment it hit the waters."

And Sion began to understand the situation. It's true that water-drenched sticks were piling up like mountains beside the pond.

Sion looked at that and asked,

"By the way, how many sticks are in that pile?"

Ferris replied,

"29982 sticks."

Which meant that around 18 sticks have gone missing inside the pond.

Sion looked at the pond again, at Iris who was overhauling rocks and sand at the bottom of the pond.

He turned towards Ferris and said,

"So, what're you going to do when you get all of them?"

"I'll use more potent glue and make the strongest ark!"

"Huh. It's nice how you guys always do these fun things~"

"Really?"

"Yeah."

"So you want to dive in?"

Sion shook his head hurriedly,

"No, no, I still have work to do, so I'm going back to the castle."

"I see. Then tell this to Ryner."

"What?"

"I'm finishing up the ark, so come over soon."

"Haha, I see."

Sion nodded.

Ferris nodded as well.

And Iris emerged from the pond with a splash again.

"Big sister, I can't find them!"

Ferris looked troubled, and she placed her sword down on the ground.

"I'm left with no choice. I'm coming."

She jumped into the pond.

"Kyah-!"

Iris shouted happily. But in the middle of it, Ferris stepped on her face and jumped into the pond.

"Gyaah-!"

Her shout turned into a scream.

The two of them looked rather happy, fooling around in the water, and Sion observed them,

"....It does look fun. Lucile, don't you want to join them?"

He muttered.

Of course, no answer came.

Sion smiled. He turned his back towards them and began walking.

From the Eris house.

He made his way back towards the castle from the center of Roland's darkness.



His office was quiet.

The king's office in the Roland castle was an unbelievably plain room.

There were bookshelves and only two tables.

One man was sleeping on one of them.

Ryner Lute.

Messy black hair that told of his sleeping habits, and a tall, thin figure that just stench of lethargy.

He was sprawled over around thirty documents and slept with drool coming from his mouth.

Sion looked at Ryner,

"Hey."

He said,

"Hey, Ryner."

"...."

"Can you hear my voice?"

He tried calling out to Ryner, but no reply came.

Sion smiled and sighed right after. He headed towards his own desk and sat down.

The amount of documents on his table seemed to reach towards the ceiling. When he left the office, the pile was only half of its current height, but it seemed like his work increased exponentially in the small time that he was out.

The ones on the left were new ones. The ones on the right were already taken care of and brought out by his underlings.

Only unfinished work remained.

He placed his hand on the topmost document. It was something that had to be done today, but he couldn't take care of all these documents even if he worked three days without sleeping.

He hadn't slept for two days already. And Ryner was with him in that regard, so he'd understand why Ryner would want to sleep now.

Sion stared at Ryner, and then at the impossible amount of work he had to do,

".....Hah."

He sighed and breathed in,

"Hey, Ryner."

He said.

"Don't sleep~ I can't do this alone~ Help me~"

He spoke, but Ryner didn't answer. He must've been tired as well. Ever since Ryner came here, his work has lessened drastically. Even though Ryner hated trouble and always said he was sleepy, he was helping Sion as much as he could.

And he dealt with all the problems that normally would've gone to Sion.

He even worried about Sion's condition.

"...."

Sion looked at the black-haired sleepyhead and thought that he'd have to thank him sometime.

I'm so glad that you came back — he wanted to tell him that.

So he grabbed the ink bottle on the table and pulled off its cap. He threw the bottle at Ryner as hard as he could. The bottle hit Ryner's head.

"Woah, ouch!?"

Ryner shouted and looked up. The contents of the ink emptied themselves on his face...

"You! What are you doing!?"

Ryner hollered, but Sion smiled,

"Well~ I was just thinking of thanking you for all the help you've given me, Ryner!"

Ryner gripped the ink bottle tightly,

"How is this thanking me!?"

"Hmm. This is what you get for leaving me behind and sleeping~"

"You left me behind and went out for a walk!"

"But I came back."

"Do I look like I care!?"

"I'm back~"

"I doooooooooooooon't give a damn, seriously! Please! I've been working for you for two straight days...."

"Make that three, then..."

"Stop screwing arouuuuuuuuuuuuuund!"

Ryner interrupted Sion's words and hollered.

Of course he understood those sentiments. So much that it hurts. But Sion made himself into a demon and said, while pointing towards the pile of unfinished work on his left,

"But you see, there's still so much left."

Ryner looked at the pile of documents with his sleepy eyes. He swung his hand nonchalantly and threw the ink bottle back. Not towards Sion, but directly towards the mountain of paperwork, which crumbled from the impact.

And Sion looked at the avalanche of papers,

"...It'll be difficult to pick them up."

He muttered.

"See! See! You're so tired that you don't even get mad at this! Seriously, it's no good. Let's sleep, alright? Working overnight is just stupid. And I hate working so much that I risk crumbling to dust every time I hear the word 'work', so making me work overnight is just stupid to the extreme and I'll really kill you dammit!?"

Ryner ranted on and on. Sion said,

"You became more energetic after taking a small nap?"

"I didn't."

"Then you could work a little longer...."

"I won't. I'll be going back home."

Ryner stood up sleepily and said,

"You should go home too. Go home and sleep."

Sion shrugged and answered,

"And where would that be?"

"No idea."

"So where would yours be?"

"Wherever you aren't."

"Haha."

Sion slumped his shoulders and thought.

Both of them didn't have actual homes.

No, they didn't even have a family.

Because everyone died.

Back then, Roland was corrupted to the core, and life was cheap.

So their friends and families died. And as survivors, they nestled close to each other and tried their hardest to live.

So that this country would improve slightly.

So that there'd be less people like them.

They can't turn back time, but still, they wanted a brighter future.

So,

"...Well, I'll just work a little longer..."

Sion made to pick up the documents.

But a wave of dizziness assaulted him. It was the same as always. The kind of dizziness that assaulted him every day ever since he absorbed the **Hero**.

And his memories circled.

Mysterious memories that were not his own.

Dark memories.

Memories of a monster.

Memories of a monster were played back inside his head, almost like it was trying to wrestle control from Sion, trying to deprive him of his freedom, tormenting his whole body with pain. And a strange scenery appeared in his head.

It was a field.

The moon rose above the field.

But everything was dark.

Extremely dark.

There was nothing but darkness.

"...."

He felt a voice calling out to him from afar.

Someone was trying to say something.

But he couldn't really make out the words.

"....on..."

He felt someone faintly calling his own name from afar. But he couldn't spare a moment to respond.

There was only the darkness, the darkness, and he-

But right then,

"....Hey Sion! Are you alright!?"

A loud voice sounded beside his ear.

Sion regained his consciousness thanks to the voice. He raised his face, and saw Ryner standing there.

The darkness had disappeared.

And so did the field.

Only the face of his closest friend remained, looking down at him with worry. He was grasping Sion's shoulders, as if to reaffirm that he was awake.

Sion looked at those hands, and smiled. He smiled kindly and happily.

He held back the pain that ran throughout his body and smiled.

"....Ah~ I was asleep."

He said.

"I guess I was sleepy too. I really can't go on without sleeping. My consciousness just blanked out for a moment."

Ryner looked at him with a "I told you!" face.

"Your consciousness just blanked out....? Geez, seriously, I forbid you from working anymore today. You'll really die if you keep this up, you know?"

Sion nodded.

"Hmm. You're right. I'll reflect upon this."

"Oh, for once you're honest."

"I'm always honest, right?"

"I'm throwing up."

Ryner said with a deadpan expression. Sion laughed, and picked up another piece of document.

"So, I'll sleep after I finish this..."

"You're not reflecting upon this at all."

Ryner whacked his head.

Sion cradled his head and looked up at Ryner.

"That hurt."

"That's the whole point. The next time you don't sleep, I'll knock you out, alright?"

He said, and Sion smiled again.

He smiled even though he felt like crying.

And,

"I get it."

He said.

"I'll sleep a little."

He said.

He stood up and pointed towards the bedroom beside the office.

"Sleep with me..."

"Go kill yourself."

"Ahaha."

"Ah geez, stop saying stupid things and just sleep. I'm going back to the inn and sleeping."

"Alright, see you two hours later..."

Sion waved his hand, and Ryner nodded, turning his back towards him. While he made his way towards the exit with fumbling steps, he said,

"See you two hundred hours later."

"You're not coming back for ten days?"

"I don't want to come back, ever again."

"But you will, right?"

Ryner shrugged and left the room.

Sion stared at the door and shrugged. He attempted to return to his desk, but...

"...."

I'll stop. He tapped his own head and smiled bitterly, making his way to the bedroom. Sion lay down on the bed.

But his pain won't disappear with sleep.

The pain running through his entire body won't disappear.

He knew that from the very beginning. Ever since he made a contract with Lucile and decided to take the **Hero** into his own body.

And whenever he closed his eyes, the memories returned.

The memories of that monster returned.

The monster's memories went wild inside him, violating, invading and breaking his mind.

"..."

Sion closed his eyes.

But slumber wouldn't grace him with its presence.

What assaulted him was pain, despair, and the dark scene he bore witness to a moment ago.

A moon made its ascent above fields of wilderness.

But everything was dark.

The darkness expanded, as if to envelop the entire world—

And a lone demon was there.

A lone demon with a lonesome face stood still against the solitude that battered at him.

He stared at that demon.

He stared at the beautiful demon who was looking up at him with tenderness in his eyes and the moon at his back

Sion called out the demon's name.

He called out the name of the demon in front of him.

"Ryner."

And the demon responded.

With happiness, tenderness, delight, loneliness—

"...Ah....aah, I see. So you finally called my name, Sion."

The demon said.

And when he looked at this memory, everything began to fall apart.

When he regained consciousness, Sion found himself on a bed.

"...."

He looked at the ceiling.

And judging from its color and surface, he was in a hospital room. He'd often fainted and been carried here.

He looked beside him.

And Ryner was there.

He was looking at Sion with a sleepy expression,

"You awake?"

He said.

Sion nodded,

"Yes, I am. I should get back to work..."

Ryner smacked Sion's forehead with his hand,

"No you don't. Do you even understand your current situation?"

He asked. Of course Sion understood.

The **Fallen Dark Hero** [Asruld Roland] was currently residing in his body, and the monster was trying to wrestle control of his body from him.

If the **Hero** won, then Sion's consciousness will disappear.

And if Sion won — he'd stop being "human" completely.

It's a lose-lose situation, but his inner conflict with the monster still continued.

And he'll lose consciousness again.

When the **Hero's** memories fill up his consciousness and attempt to assimilate into Sion's, he'll lose consciousness.

Just like he did this time.

But when did that happen?

Ryner spoke up,

"You wouldn't wake up."

"I wouldn't wake up?"

"You were on the bed, sleeping, and wouldn't wake up no matter what I tried."

Apparently that's what happened.

He wanted to sneak in a quick nap, but it looked like he couldn't wake up from that.

And he didn't remember clearly what happened then.

He had a feeling that the **Hero** showed him a bad dream, but he couldn't recall the specifics.

So Sion smiled and said to Ryner,

"....Well, I had a really nice dream, so I didn't want to wake up."

Ryner stared at him blankly.

"I bet it's something perverted."

"You're right. Want to know the details?"

"No thanks. That aside..."

Sion interrupted,

"Words that thinly veil your deep interest in my nightly affairs..."

"Shut it."

He was whacked on the head.

Sion cradled his head,

"Ouch~"

He said, but Ryner replied,

"I smacked you about five times harder, but still, you didn't wake up."

Sion nodded with a straight face.

"Hmm. It must've been a really erotic dream."

"....."

But Ryner stared at him with a gloomy face.

And,

"You're hiding something, right? Are you suffering from some terrible disease?"

Sion locked gazes with Ryner.

If he looked away, Ryner might question him even more, so he looked straight at Ryner and said,

"I wonder?"

Then he looked at the doctor behind Ryner.

"What did the doctor say?"

But that question was meaningless.

The doctors were all told to keep silent about Sion's condition.

And it's not like they can pinpoint his condition with current magic technology.

He was keeping a monster within his body — a monster outside the normal boundaries of the world.

No matter how much they investigate Sion's condition, they wouldn't know what was happening to him.

But Sion said,

"They looked over me while I was asleep, right? What did the doctors say?"

Ryner shrugged,

"Just that you're overworking yourself."

Sion immediately made a surprised face,

"Huuh? I-I'm suffering from such a terrible disease—!?"

"....."

"This is no good, Ryner. I can't do this anymore. Will you hear my last words?"

Ryner looked at him with tired eyes,

"What now?"

"Do my job..."

"No."

"What a fast reply"

Sion laughed bitterly.

He straightened himself.

As usual, he felt pain all over his body. Every inch of his skin felt burning and sore.

He felt a sense of wrongness, as if his brains, his insides, everything about him wasn't his anymore.

But he smiled.

He smiled happily,

"I don't need to worry if it's just a matter of overworking."

He got off the bed and stood up.

Ryner looked up at him from his chair,

"Overworking is serious business, you know?"

"But I've slept quite a lot."

"It's not enough."

"Really?"

Sion thought for a moment,

"How long was I out of it?"

Ryner answered,

"A whole day since I found you, I guess?"

"Hmm. A whole day?"

"Yes, a whole day."

"So I've slept enough. More than enough."

He began walking.

He thought of the amount of work that must've have piled up while he was unconscious.

Ryner spoked up behind him,

"You'll die if you keep pushing yourself so hard."

Sion turned around and smiled,

"Are you that worried about me?"

Disgust immediately filled Ryner's face,

"What?"

Sion was enjoying himself.

"So, if I died, would you become this country's king?"

"No way."

"Keep telling yourself that..."

"Go die."

"Hahaha. So, let's get back to work."

Sion said, and Ryner nodded. He jumped into the bed that Sion occupied just moments ago, drew up the blankets and looked at Sion,

"Work hard!"

"Hey!"

Sion said, but Ryner immediately closed his eyes and fell asleep.

He wanted to wake Ryner up, but,

"....."

Sion stopped himself.

Maybe Ryner didn't sleep and kept watch over him the entire time.

"Well, fine by me."

He turned on his heels and began walking again.

He exited the hospital room.

One man awaited him at the end of the corridor.

Lieutenant General Miran Froaude.

Long, pitch black hair and a slim body.

Cold eyes that looked down on everything.

Those eyes turned towards him.

"...I heard you lost consciousness."

Sion answered without stopping.

"A usual occurrence."

"Is it due to the power within Your Majesty's body?"

"Yes."

"Any problem?"

Sion smiled thinly at his question.

Of course there are problems.

Even at this moment, he was wandering within pains intense enough to drive him to insanity.

But he can't just stop.

The world had already awakened.

Awakened within darkness.

Gastark had already begun gathering **Heroes' Relics** and weaponizing them.

Various monstrous forces had already begun to act, as if in response to Sion absorbing the **Hero**.

He didn't have time.

Didn't have time to stop at his leisure.

But still, he said,

"....None. Proceed as always."

He passed by Froaude.

Froaude smiled at that and followed him while keeping his head slightly bowed.

"The experiments are proceeding smoothly."

He spoke from behind.

The experiments were held to strengthen their army.

Experiments to make reinforced soldiers by breaking humans' minds, bodies, hearts.

In other words, they were experimenting on humans.

Froaude continued,

"Everyone gladly offered themselves for the experiment. All for the sake of Your Majesty."

"....."

"Of course, there were numerous sacrifices. But in exchange, we're getting quick results."

"....."

"So your choice saved this country's futur...."

But Sion spoke over his words,

"Spare me the worthless consolation. Give me the facts."

Froaude bowed again.

"Forgive me for my imprudence."

"When will we get results?"

"Within three months."

"We'll wait until then before marching to Imperial Nelpha."

"Acknowledged."

"Begin preparations. Roland will announce its dominance to the world."

"Yes."

"Alright, go."

Froaude spoke in a happy voice,

"...I'm relieved."

He said.

"I thought that man...Ryner Lute would shackle Your Majesty, but..."

Sion turned around and said,

"I said, 'go'."

Froaude widened his lips, red like that of a demon's, and smiled thinly. He bowed deeply and whispered,

"Yes, Your Majesty."

After throwing a glance at him, Sion began walking again.

He emerged from the facility designed for medical magic research and headed towards the palace.

The sky was clear.

Sunlight poured from a cloudless sky.

He walked on beneath it.

People who passed him by all looked like they've met a saint and bowed their heads.

Sion smiled at them.

He nodded slightly, as if to reassure them that they made the right choice in following him.

"...."

But this is what always happens.

Those who followed him stepped further into the depths of darkness.

Even though the sky is so clear.

Even though the sun is shining so bright, this country, Roland — — cannot surface from the depths of darkness.

Perhaps it's impossible to find a darker place than Roland on the Menoris continent.

He looked up at the sunlight.

He looked straight at the light that threatened to burn his eyes.

Wouldn't it be nice if that light could chase away all the darkness in me, he thought. But the darkness within him was much, much stronger than the light, and squirmed in his head, as if in defiance of the sunlight.

The darkness wriggled.

And memories began coming back to him, little by little.

It was probably the dream he had just now.

A dream he'd forgotten.

A despicable dream.

A mysterious dream, the product of his own memories mixing with the **Hero's** memories.

But the dream suddenly came back in his head.

In an instant, he knew what the dream was about.

And in response to that dream,

To that dream,

".....Ah, I see."

Sion whispered.

He smiled sadly and clutched his chest. Clutched the chest of someone who was screaming that he just wanted to abandon everything and escape.

"....So I really have to kill Ryner...."

He whispered.

The sky was clear.

But it was still dark.

Everything was dark.

And memories danced within such darkness.

They weren't his own memories.

They were the memories of the monster residing within him.

Memories of ones who shaped the world.

He traced them.

He traced that memory.

And the beginning of that memory——

Was in darkness, after all.

The Story of the Awakening Hero

Chapter 1

I am a consciousness.

A small consciousness.

On a certain day, I was born in the head of a certain boy.

I was born as a pitch black consciousness within a boy who was living happily.

To make him fall.

To lead him to his downfall.

And at that moment, the boy's consciousness was completely devoured by me.

Even though he was enjoying life with such a happy face, I took over his consciousness and became him.

For what.

Why.

Why did it happen that way.

I knew all of that.

The moment I took over the boy's consciousness and had my first look of the world through his eyes, I knew the reason for my existence.

I am destruction.

I am destruction.

"....."

I opened my eyes.

I opened the boy's eyes, and I looked at my surroundings with the boy's eyes.

It was the first scene I saw.

The first scene I saw in my life.

At first, I didn't quite understand what I was seeing.

But I devoured the boy's mind and assimilated his knowledge.

Then I knew why I was here.

Why I was standing here.

And for what.

But in the end, I am only here for one thing.

I am destruction.

Destruction, destruction, destruction.

I stand here, having been born for solely for that.

To correct the structure of this mad world, my consciousness is—

"...."

At that moment, my name was called.

"Hey, Asruld."

That's my — no, the name of the boy I took over.

I devoured the boy's mind again, and remembered my own name.

Asruld.

Asruld Roland.

That's my name.

That's my name.

I looked towards the person who called my name.

A beautiful girl stood there.

She looked to be about fourteen, fifteen. A young face framed by curly, light brown hair.

But her bewitching smile were unfitting for her features.

Moist eyes and lustrous, pink lips.

Words spilled from those lips.

Words that were ingrained with magic to enchant and confound the hearts of others.

"Hey, Asruld. What's wrong?"

She said.

"If you don't eat now, the food will be gone soon."

She said.

I looked at her feet. Her slender, beautiful legs were deeply entrenched within the ground, and seem to be absorbing something within the earth.

They slurped and gulped, sucking something from the ground, and each time, she would wear an expression of ecstasy.

And I looked at the ground as well.

But it wasn't the ground.

It was the back of a giant god.

The back of a god once called Menoris.

But he was devoured and killed by the **Goddesses** that rapidly reproduced, and became a corpse.

The **Goddesses** were devouring its corpse.

While wearing rapturous expressions, the **Goddesses** devoured gods.

Countless **Goddesses** were around me.

Beautiful ones.

Ugly ones.

Strong ones.

Weak ones.

Many **Goddesses** swarmed around and were devouring god.

And it seems like that I also belonged to the **Goddess** species.

But not now.

Not anymore.

One of the **Goddesses** spoke up again.

It was the brown-haired girl just now.

She looked at me and said,

"Why aren't you eating?"

I looked at her and replied,

"I'm not hungry."

She widened her eyes in surprise and smiled.

"Geez, stop it with the jokes. Our hunger can never be sated. We were made that way, after all."

But I repeated my words,

"I'm not hungry."

".....Huh. If that's true, then you're quite...fascinating."

She pulled out her legs from the earth. She stopped eating Menoris.

She looked at me as if enchanted and intoxicated. Her eyes almost made me think that she loved me.

"....A **Goddess** who isn't hungry? How fascinating..."

"Really?"

"Yes. But actually, you're not Asru'd anymore, right?"

"...."

"I wonder who you are. I wonder what happened to you."

"..."

"But that doesn't really matter. Because you're so interesting. Because you look so delicious. So you're mine. I'll eat you before the other **Goddesses** notice you."

She smiled.

She smiled happily.

And I smiled back.

"You won't be able to."

"Ha, who do you think I am?"

Hearing her words, I called out her name.

I'm confronting a monster who would come out victorious even if all the other **Goddesses** nearby went against her.

"...You weren't chosen. So you can't win against me, Milk. **Goddess of Reincarnation** [Milk Ephillet]."

But I still smiled.

"...You weren't chosen. So you can't win against me. Milk. **Goddess of Reincarnation** [Milk Ephillet]"

At my words, the **Goddess** — Milk tilted her head in confusion.

She looked at me and said,

"...I wasn't chosen?"

She repeated those words to herself.

"Wasn't chosen. Wasn't chosen...in other words, you were chosen by something?"

She asked.

Then she looked at me straight ahead at me.

Magic dwelled in her eyes. Magic to analyze my insides.

But I don't accept that.

I don't accept her tremendous power.

And Milk,

"....."

She smiled.

"What's that? Why did such a power suddenly..."

In the middle of her sentence, she moved.

She moved to catch me off my guard.

Her figure disappeared, and the next instant, she reappeared before me. She swung up her slender arm and attempted to pierce my chest with it.

But I grabbed her arm.

Milk charged her arm with magic and attempted to repel my arm, but I grabbed it with even more force,

"...It's impossible for you, Milk. And disappear."

I whispered at her ear.

Milk widened her eyes and looked at me.

Her expression was fearful for one instant, but she smiled again.

"Aha."

She laughed, and severed the arm in my grasp with her other arm.

Then she turned to her severed arm and commanded,

"Shatter, and make yourselves his parasites."

And Milk's arm, still held tightly in my grip, shattered into many pieces. And the fragments attempted to enter my body.

Even though they shouldn't be able to do that.

I swiped away the fragments of her arm with both of my hands, and the fragments spread out across my surroundings in a frenzy.

And those fragments killed, killed, and killed the surrounding **Goddesses**.

But by that time, Milk had already put a great distance between herself and me.

The fragments closed in upon Milk, but she grabbed the heads of the two **Goddesses** beside her, drew them together and used them as shields.

The two **Goddesses** died immediately.

But she didn't care.

She didn't care about her comrades.

She merely looked at me in joy,

"....Interesting. What's that, what's that? Why do you have so much power? Just what did you eat to end up like that?"

I looked towards her.

And I opened my palm. I created a black sword from the center of my palm.

I grabbed the sword.

And Milk,

"Incredible, tremendous power. Very obviously a different kind from mine. Is that what you spoke about? The power of the chosen one?"

I nodded at her question.

"I think so."

"But just *what* have you been chosen by?"

"....."

"What are you?"

I answered,

"The one to slaughter all of you."

"So you're a predator? A new system born to diminish the numbers of us **Goddesses**, who have multiplied too much?"

I nodded at that.

However, Milk seemed happy.

"But for that..."

She swung her hand.

Her right arm, which should've been severed just now, but had already regenerated.

Then something flew towards me. Something unseen yet potentially fatal.

I tried to react to it, but I couldn't make it.

This time, my arm was severed.

The hand with which I was holding my sword was cut off and roamed the skies.

Milk looked up at my flying hand,

"For a predator, you seem awfully weak from my perspective...but whatever. I'll look at your true identity."

Then she looked around her. She turned towards the **Goddesses** who are indulging themselves by devouring Menoris' corpse and ordered,

"Hey, you filthy **Goddesses**. Stop eating. You have a new prey. Attack that mad **Goddess** — that mutant."

In response, the monsters lifted up their heads.

Unlike Milk, their lifted faces were creepy, and their features were pretty.

They looked towards me, and attacked me at the same time.

"....."

I stared at them, and then looked up at the sky. I looked up at my arm in midair, still gripping my sword,

"Sword."

I whispered.

And my arm reacted.

The black sword reacted.

The sword moved towards the attacking **Goddesses**.

The sword drew a wide arc across the sky, as if to mow them down.

And just by that, a few dozens of **Goddesses** disappeared.

But the **Goddesses** didn't decrease in number.

The **Goddesses**, who multiplied to an abnormal extent, didn't decrease in number.

They multiplied enough to cover the back of Menoris.

No, the **Goddesses** multiplied almost enough to cover every single space in this world, and compared to the numbers that I killed, far more of them have been born.

Another few dozens of **Goddesses** closed in upon me.

I created a sword with my left arm as well, and cut them apart.

Something is trying to attack me from behind.

I ordered,

"Sword, return."

And called back my right arm which was floating in midair. My right arm passed over my head and tore apart the **Goddesses** behind me.

Then my arm reattached itself to my stump.

I held up both swords with my arms, and tore through the next wave of attacking **Goddesses**.

Tore them apart.

Tore them apart.

However, as usual, the **Goddesses** didn't decrease in number.

On the contrary, they were steadily increasing.

Steadily increasing.

And I killed them.

Kill.

Kill.

Kill.

So that my sword can bring death to them faster than the **Goddesses** can increase—

I swung my swords.

Desperately.

And every time I do so, death danced around me.

The Goddesses' heads, torso, and blood gradually stained my surroundings black.

And each time, I felt my own power increasing.

The more **Goddesses** are destroyed.

The more I swing my **swords**.

I felt my power increasing.

But Milk merely looked down at that.

She floated above me, and looked down at me with interest.

And another woman appeared behind her.

A woman that seemed a few years older than Milk.

She was probably a **Goddess**.

But her power was incomparable to the ones that attacked me.

A monster that had around the same level of power that Milk had.

The woman looked down at me and said,

"Hey, what's *that*."

Milk shrugged and answered,

"I wonder?"

"Why is he killing our comrades?"

"Dunno."

"Why are you leaving him alone?"

Milk turned towards the woman,

"Cause it's dangerous to be near him, right? But the situation's changed now that you're here. Me and you, the two of us could probably overpower him."

The woman looked at Milk and nodded.

"Let us deal with it. *That* is dangerous. I did hear that mutants like him appear once in a while, but..."

Milk responded to those words,

"Oh my, you know about *that*?"

The woman answered,

"Just from the rumors. I did hear about some **Goddesses** who suddenly turned mad and started killing their comrades."

Milk tilted her head,

"Do you see that as our comrade...as belonging to our species?"

And the woman said with a bored face,

"I'm not interested."

"Really?"

"Yes. Anyways, we're finishing him off. *That* is dangerous. It's something that gets in our way."

"....Yes, you're right. Let's finish him off."

And Milk nodded.

I looked up at them.

While dealing with the small fry around me, I looked up at them.

And I calculated their power.

I made a guess at the scale of the power they harbor inside.

I probably couldn't win.

If it's one on one, then I can win against Milk.

And against the other **Goddess**.

But if I had to deal with both of them at the same time—

Right then, the woman started moving towards me.

Milk started heading towards me as well.

I threw one of my swords at them. The magic released from the sword attacked the woman.

But the woman dodged it completely.

And returned to attacking me again. She grabbed my arm and stopped my sword.

Taking advantage of that moment, the other **Goddesses** sank their teeth into my body.

They attempted to devour my feet, my waist, my stomach, my back.

But I paid it no heed, and attempted to cut the woman with my other sword.

However, my arm was stopped by Milk, who appeared behind me. Milk gripped my arm tightly, and bit my neck.

And she said,

With a voice of rapture and intoxication,

"Ah. You're delicious, as expected. You...you really aren't a **Goddess**, huh..."

She said.

I glanced at her face, and put magic into my gaze. Magic to curse and kill Milk.

But it didn't work on her.

Her power waged war against mine, and I couldn't kill her unless I sliced her with my sword.

So, in other words—

"....."

In other words, this is it.

It ended all too easily.

Even though I was born to bring destruction among this world, I would die without managing to destroy anything.

The woman said,

"This is it."

She said.

And then she opened her mouth, revealing her fangs, fangs that attempted to sink into my throat.

However.

"....."

Her head was separated from her torso and sailed across the sky.

Milk beheaded the woman.

The woman, now reduced to a head, glared at Milk,

"What..."

But before she could finish, her head disappeared. Milk released her magic and killed the woman.

And she even killed the **Goddesses** that are chewing on my body.

Then she ordered her own comrades,

"Don't touch him."

And all the **Goddesses** left me, as if on a cue.

I looked at her while she went about the series of mysterious actions.

I didn't know why she would do this, so I looked down at her in a daze.

And she said,

While looking up at me,

"...Fu, fufufu, I wouldn't give away such a delicious prey to the other fools."

She said.

And I gripped my sword tightly,

"But you can't win against me by yourself."

"That's true."

"Then why would you help me?"

And she held me in an embrace. She embraced my neck, and sank her teeth into it. She attempted to drink my flesh and blood.

But she didn't try to kill me.

Slowly, gently, while chewing on my neck, she looked up at me.

Her mouth was stained red by my blood.

She wiped her blood red mouth and said,

"....Every day is a repeat of yesterday. I'm stuck with an empty stomach and unsated desire day after day. I'm getting a bit tired of all that~"

I asked her, while turning towards her face nearby,

"So you want me to kill you here?"

"Hmm~ I don't really care, but since I saved you and all, I'd prefer you pay the favor back."

"Favor?"

"Well, if your way of thinking even includes the concept of favors, that is."

She said and moved away from me.

Then she lightly touched her flat stomach.

"Aah~ It's not enough. I want to eat more. But I have to endure it. I wouldn't find something interesting like this anywhere else."

She said.

I didn't understand the meaning of what she said, so I gripped my sword, just in case. To kill her, I gripped my sword and charged magic into it.

She laughed at that.

"I'm fine with being killed, but with the way you are now, you'll lose to a **Goddess** immediately, you know? There are plenty of folks amongst **Goddesses** that are more ancient than me...and judging from what the woman said just now, others like you have appeared before and been killed. So you'll definitely get killed as well."

I answered,

"So?"

She said,

"So I'll protect you. I don't know what you were born for, but as long as I find you interesting, I'll protect you and raise you."

She said ridiculous things like that.

So I laughed.

So I laughed.

And I said,

"I never thought of being protected by someone weaker than me."

"How cocky."

"So I'll kill you."

I said and swung up my sword. Immediately, my sword was filled with enough power to kill Milk.

She looked up at the sword.

With a face that said she didn't care whether she died or not,

"....Well, if that's what you want to do, then I can't really do anything about it."

"....."

".....What's wrong? You're not killing me?"

So I asked her once again,

"....Why did you help me?"

Milk shrugged her shoulders and said,

"I think I've told you this already, but I'm bored, and you looked interesting — is that not good enough of an explanation?"

I didn't swing down my sword.

I didn't swing down my sword.

And she wore a troubled expression,

"...Do you not have any of Asruld's memories? You remember my name, so I think you have a bit of it, at least."

She said.

At her words, I searched through my head again.

Searched through the head of the boy, whose consciousness I took over.

And I immediately gained information on her.

On the **Goddess of Reincarnation**[Milk Ephillet].

So I said,

While looking at the girl in front of me,

"....Ah, you're my...breeding partner."

She nodded.

She laughed a bit embarrassedly,

And,

"But you don't lust after me anymore, right?"

She said,

And I stared at her.

Stared at her small body.

But I don't feel any sort of thirst for her. I don't desire her.

What I held was impulse alone.

An impulse to destroy everything.

She looked a bit sad,

"So your partner isn't me. But you can't win against us alone — a predator who was almost killed by a single **Goddess**? Can something ridiculous like that really exist? Or is there..."

She said.

"Is there...another partner that's been decided for you....?"

She looked around her.

As if searching for something.

Around us were the creepy **Goddesses** who have begun devouring Menoris' body again, as if they've forgotten our existence.

But Milk ignored them and looked even farther away.

She looked into the distance.

And tilted her head,

"Anyways, if you aren't going to kill me, then let's stick together. I'll help you, and I'll go with you to find that one person who's well-matched for you."

She said and began to walk.

I looked at her back and said,

"I'm not having second thoughts. In the end, I'll kill you."

And she turned around happily,

"Aha! So, you'll let me live till the very end."

She said.

I didn't answer her.

I didn't answer her.

I merely made my swords disappear.

And Milk began walking again with a smile on her face.

She was headed towards the south.

Towards the south.

I asked her,

"Why are you going there?"

"I wonder~"

"Is there something over there?"

Milk stopped her steps and said,

Turning around to face me,

"This is just a rumor, mind you."

"Rumor?"

"That there's a hated being in the south."

"Hated being?"

"Yep."

"*What* is it?"

"Dunno. It's a rumor, after all. But since it's hated by the **Goddesses**, maybe it'll become your comrade, right?"

She said.

I answered her,

"I don't have any comrades."

"Really?"

"Yes. I was born to injure and destroy everything."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"But you didn't kill me."

"....."

"Even though you're a system born to injure and destroy everything, you didn't destroy me. Why is that?"

"....."

"You don't know? You can't answer?"

I nodded at her question.

"Yes, I don't know."

She smiled and said,

"Then you probably have emotions. You're not just a system, you have emotions."

She looked at the monsters around her.

The monsters who continued to devour Menoris without a second thought.

It's true that I don't see her to be the same as those monsters.

No, even the woman who attacked me just now and had about the same amount of power as Milk did seem different.

So I asked her,

"Who are you?"

Milk answered,

"I'm trying to find out myself."

"I see."

"Yep. Why am I different from the others? Is there any meaning to my difference? Or is it all meaningless, and I'm just broken that way?"

"I see..."

"Yep. Come on, let's go. If we overstay our welcome, the other **Goddesses** will come. If three or more **Goddesses** with my level of power came, then we couldn't win against them."

She said and began walking again.

Towards the south.

The distant south.

While following her from behind, I asked,

"So, what's the name of that hated being in the south?"

Milk said the name of the hated being.

The name of the hated being, said to dwell in the south—

"Ryner Eris Reed."

She spoke of such a name.

When he regained his own consciousness, Sion was crouched on the floor.

He couldn't remember how long he stayed in that position.

Was it only a few seconds?

Or a few hours?

He didn't know.

His body simply shook.

Out of fear?

Out of despair?

No.

"..."

He shook due to those memories.

The monster's memories whirled in his head.

The memories of the monster living within him continued to flash within his head. He couldn't understand all of those memories.

The memories whirled and images came up one after another. However, only a few fragments of memories were left in Sion's head, almost as if the rest of the memories had been rejected.

But there were things that he did know.

Some things that were within him faintly.

It seems like a long time ago, he was on this Menoris continent—

But Sion shook his head right there.

"No."

He frowned and said.

"I...I'm not Asruld!"

He said and beat his head with his fists.

He pressed down on his head.

To chase away the images in his head.

The memories.

The curse.

Sion pressed down harshly on his own head.

But the memories kept coming.

He didn't know what kind of memories they were or what purpose they held.

He couldn't understand them clearly either.

However, those memories went wild inside him, almost like they were trying to take over Sion's head, consciousness and body.

The reason of birth for the monster called Asruld Roland.

The proof of existence responsible for the creation of Asruld Roland attempted to fulfill itself within Sion's body.

But,

"...As if...I'd let you do that."

Sion groaned.

He poured power into his entire body.

He bit down on his lip and smiled.

So that he can keep a stronger hold on his own will against Asruld's emerging consciousness.

And gradually, the memories of the **Hero**[Asruld Roland] receded within his mind.

The more that he tried to hold on to his consciousness, the less he could see of his surroundings.

However, Asruld's consciousness was still battling against Sion's will. Within Sion's head, Asruld's memories and Sion's own consciousness overlapped each other.

".....I"

He whispered.

"I...am..."

At that moment, he heard a voice.

"Huh, Sion?"

At the sound of that voice, Sion violently dragged his own consciousness back into reality.

He exchanged the power he had been using to devour the **Hero's**[Asruld Roland's] consciousness into the ability to recognize reality.

And he was able to pinpoint where he was.

He was currently in the corridors.

A corner of the corridor leading to his office.

He was crouched upon the floor.

And a man had found him and said,

"Just what exactly are you doing there?"

It was Calne.

Major General Clane Kaiwel.

Gentle, wavy blond hair and lovely blue eyes.

He was Sion's right-hand man since the revolution, and ever since Sion became king, he was in charge of overseeing internal proceedings.

Sion turned to Calne,

".....Ah, Calne."

And smiled at him.

His entire body hurt.

The consciousness of the **Hero** attacked him with the intent of taking over his head, heart, and all of his existence.

Despite that, Sion still smiled at Calne.

"Well~ I just dropped my pen."

He said, taking out a pen from the folds of his clothing and standing up.

Sion showed him the pen.

Calne looked down at it with a mystified expression and said,

"Hey, Sion."

"Hmm?"

"I feel a bit bad for pointing this out when you've finally found your pen, but..."

"Hmm."

"I've seen you crouching there for about two minutes already~"

He said.

Sion widened his eyes a tiny bit in surprise. Then he smiled again to reassure Calne.

"Oh, really?"

He said, but Calne replied with an angry yet worried expression.

"Don't tell me, you fainted again?"

"No, no, it's nothing like that..."

But he was interrupted.

"Don't— tell— me—, you fainted again?"

The moment that Sion shut his mouth, Calne turned around and called,

"Eslina! Come over here for a mom...."

Sion hurriedly said,

"No, no, Calne. It's not that big of a deal."

"It's a big deal! I've never heard of a country's king just fainting on the floor out of exhaustion. What do you think Fiole would say if he saw this from heaven!"

Sion shrugged his shoulders at his lecture. He looked up at the ceiling and said,

"....Is Fiole really watching from heaven?"

"He liked you, Sion, so he would be watching, no? Veeery closely, like thiiiiis."

Calne said, having found one of Sion's weak points.

Sion smiled at that and turned towards Calne.

"Well, Fiore might be looking at you, Calne."

Calne tilted his head,

"Huh? Me?"

"Right."

"Why me?"

Sion smiled mischievously.

"Nah~ Maybe he's watching you veeery closely, like thiiiis so you don't touch his dear sister."

Calne's eyes widened instantly.

"Wha!?"

He said, and seemed strangely shaken.

"No way, I-I haven't touched Eslina!"

Sion looked at Calne with lidded eyes.

"Not yet, right?"

"Geez, Sion. Don't tease me. Eslina is just fourteen, you know?"

"Calne, you're just nineteen, aren't you?"

"I'm eighteen."

"Four years' difference isn't enough to warrant an arrest."

Calne looked somewhat troubled and said,

"Geez. I like older women...Sion, you should know that, right?"

"Hmmm."

"What's with that 'hmmm'?"

"Nah, nothing-"

"Seriously, don't say that with such a deep face."

"Well, Calne, you're just strangely nice to Eslina. So I just thought that you might like her."

Calne looked at him and smiled with a troubled expression.

"Really, we're not made for each other. Eslina is a good girl, after all."

"So, Calne is a bad boy?"

"I am, right? I've been playing with all these married madams."

"That's seriously the worst."

"Ah, you won't deny it."

Calne smiled.

By the way, Calne's affairs with noble ladies only began as a form of information gathering. Under Miller's command, Calne gathered information from the nobles.

However,

"....But you're not doing that anymore, right? Ever since Eslina came..."

Calne interrupted and said,

"It's because you have more power now, Sion. I didn't need to do that anymore, so I stopped. It's not due to Eslina."

"Really?"

"Of course."

"Hmm."

"That's why I said, what's with that 'hmm'?!"

Calne shouted in anger.

"Well, whatever~"

Sion smiled and attempted to head towards his office.

However, Calne grabbed his shoulder,

"Where do you think you're going?"

He asked, so Sion answered, pointing towards the direction he was going,

"To the office."

And Calne's face just screamed 'are you kidding me'.

"No~way. Sion, you fainted just now, right? You have to see the doctor.."

"No, no, I just came back from the doctor."

"Eh, really?"

"Yes."

"So, what did the doctor say?"

Sion didn't know how to answer that. If he said 'nothing's wrong', Calne will complain and ask him how he could've fainted when nothing's wrong. Still, if he told Calne he had some disease, he'd probably worry him even more.

And really, this wasn't a disease.

It's something ridiculous like fighting for dominance with a monster within yourself.

It's not like he can explain that to Calne.

Sion thought for a moment and said,

"Overworking...?"

Calne said with an astonished face,

"See!?"

He shouted angrily, and poured even more strength into his grip on Sion's shoulder.

"I won't let you go back to your office! Sion never sleeps when he's in his office, after all."

"No, no, I do sleep..."

"No way. Come now, let's go back to the hospital. I'll have you sleep there."

He dragged Sion away.

Sion attempted to resist and bat away Calne's arm, but his hand was immediately held in a tight grip.

Though Calne had a gentle and smiling face, he's still a survivor of the Emirelle Troop along with Clauth. He even destroyed that troop with Clauth.

To put it bluntly, Sion can't do anything to him in combat.

Sion attempted to extract himself from Calne's grasp again.

He tried to kick Calne, but his leg was dodged. He attempted to overpower Calne with his other arm, but Calne dodged it and caught it again.

Calne tightened his grip on Sion's arm, and Sion scowled,

"Ouch! Ou-ou-ouch! I'm against violence~"

He said, and Calne looked at him with a blank face.

"So you'll listen to what I say?"

He said, and Sion raised his face.

"But I've already slept in the hospital room..."

Calne interrupted him,

"If you struggle too much, I'll really make Eslina lecture you. 'I'll tell my brother-!' et cetra et cetra."

"No, that's...."

"Then hush with the complaints and follow me. Geez, what were you thinking? Overworking yourself to the point of fainting in the corridors?"

Sion was dragged away with his arms still in Calne's grasp.

At that moment,

"What are you guys doing?"

A tall man passed them by.

It was General Claugh Krom with his red hair like fire, and trained body.

Clough looked at them and said,

"...Is that one of your hobbies?"

He said, and Sion looked up with his arms in Calne's grasp.

"Ah, Clough. I've been waiting for you. I was thinking of moving some of Estabul's soldiers into Roland territory..."

He was about to say, but Calne squeezed his arms again.

"Ouch ouch ouch! Calne, that hurt!"

"That's not the problem! How do you still manage to talk about work in a situation like this!"

"Well, Clough just passed by..."

"Clough, why don't you say something as well? Sion fainted on the floor just now!"

Clought peeked at Sion's face.

"Really?"

He asked, and Sion nodded.

"Well, the doctor gave me some medicine for sleep."

That was a lie.

But Calne said,

"Ah, so that's why you were sleeping on the floor?"

"Right. I said that I couldn't afford to sleep when I have work, so that doctor told me he'd give me some medicine that helps with my exhaustion without making me sleepy..."

"And gave you sleeping pills?"

Claugh said, and Sion nodded.

"Yep, I was completely fooled."

Claugh and Calne looked at each other and said,

"What a good doctor."

"Indeed."

Sion laughed,

"Well, I think so too...but really, Calne, can you let go of my hand now?"

Calne finally released Sion from his hold.

Sion shook his arms,

"It still hurts."

He said, and Claugh laughed,

"You should've just broken it! Even he would rest a bit after that, right?"

Calne hit his own arm in realization,

"Ah, that's right..."

"No, it's not."

Sion said with a bitter smile.

Calne shrugged,

"But I'll have to go back to the hospital room anyways. Since you already took sleeping pills, you should just sleep until the effects wear off."

Sion looked at Calne, then up at Claugh.

"And?"

He asked, and Claugh lifted the pile of documents he was carrying,

"We've already started moving the Estabul soldiers. But this is..."

He said and looked towards Sion.

Sion lifted his eyebrows and didn't answer.

But just from that,

"..."

Just from that, Claugh understood what was about to happen in this country.

He understood what was about to happen in this world.

Calne too.

He looked towards Sion as well, wearing a slightly sad yet somewhat bored face.

"..."

It's going to end.

The temporary peace, that is.

This transient moment of tranquility will finally come to an end.

And they knew that a long time ago.

The Gastark Empire had begun to invade other countries.

They destroyed the Empire of Stohl.

They knew that ever since those kinds of information started spreading.

The world will change.

It'll move into an unprecedented era of warfare.

And they couldn't afford to be left behind.

To protect their countrymen.

To protect their country.

No, this is...

This is probably all for the sake of changing everything about the current system of the world—

Right then,

"....Calne."

Sion said.

Calne looked at him with a lonely face,

"What is it?"

Sion tried to smile in reply,

"Don't make that face. It's not going to happen immediately."

"But it's inevitable, right?"

"Yes."

"When? When will it begin?"

Sion looked pensive for a moment and said,

"Less than half a year."

And at that,

"...."

Calne sunk deep into thought, then put on a smile,

"....Half a year, huh. Then I have to put my relationships with various noble ladies to rest before that."

He said and laughed.

Claugh, standing beside Calne, offered Sion a pile of documents.

"Rearrangement of the army is proceeding smoothly. Sir Miller will..."

"Come on stage soon?"

Claugh shrugged.

"I wonder. But well, it's not like he has any other choice. Even with him, we still don't have enough people."

"And Luke?"

Claugh opened his eyes somewhat reluctantly,

"How would I know?"

Sion laughed at his words.

"Aren't you friendly with each other?"

"Huh? How would you ever come to a conclusion like that?"

"Aren't you childhood friends?"

"Nothing like that."

"Haha, well, Luke is mysterious as always."

He said and looked at the pile of documents that Claugh handed over. He found a mountain of work that he has to deal with immediately.

For one moment.

For an instant, he almost looked weary.

But he endured. If he made a face like that, Calne will lock him in his hold again.

So he wiped all expression off his face,

"Now, I'll get back to work."

He said.

Calne looked at him with a pout to express his dissatisfaction at Sion's lack of rest, but Sion smiled and evaded his looks.

He ignored the two of them and attempted to return to his office.

Claugh and Calne were talking about something behind him.

Perhaps about the conflicts soon to come.

Perhaps about this world in flux.

Calne said,

"By the way, Claugh. I saw you leaving Noa's mansion yesterday night."

"Huh!? W-what are you saying..."

"Nah~ Just commenting on how late in the night it is~ Has your relationship with her finally gotten so far?"

"What are you talking about?! I didn't go to Noa's house yesterday, okay?"

"So, the day before yesterday?"

"Not that either. Even if you try to trick me with those questions, I'm not gonna fall for it since I ain't guilty of anything!"

"Huh~ You mean, not yet."

"To hell with not yet. We're not like that at all."

"You're such a kid."

"What? I'm gonna kill you, y'know?"

Sion smiled at their foolish conversation, completely unrelated to the world or the war soon to come.

He smiled without turning back.

And he headed straight to his office with that smile on his face.

He stretched for a bit, and hurried to the office.

As if running away from something, he left the place as fast as he could.

Because that is coming again.

The wave of memories.

Asruld Roland's memories attempted to invade his head.

And every time that happened, he would feel like crouching on the floor.

He would almost fall and lose his consciousness.

But he couldn't show any weakness to Claugh and others.

Because it's not something that they could do anything about. It's a problem that no normal human can do anything about.

So there's no need to worry them.

There's no need to tell them about things like that.

So he ran away as fast as possible.

His entire body hurt, and if he didn't will himself to not give in, even his consciousness would've faded. He quickly left.

Even during those moments, Asruld Roland's will is becoming stronger. Attempting to take over Sion's body, Asruld's memories and will tried to overwhelm his entire body.

His heart beat so fast he thought it'd burst. He beat his chest and pushed it back. The sense of nausea and headache increased so much that he almost couldn't hold it in,

"....Shit."

He whispered.

So quiet that nobody else could hear.

It was a scream.

It was a scream.

But his voice was simply too small and won't reach anyone. No, it'll be worse if it actually did.

So he won't call out again.

He simply tried to escape into the confines of his office with a twisted face on the brink of tears.

He opened the door.

And entered.

There was no one inside.

There was....no one inside.

Neither Ryner nor Ferris was present.

He confirmed that, and,

"...Ugh, ah."

Let out a pain-filled groan and crouched down.

He crouched with his back to the door.

As long as he sat here, no one should be able to get in. If he blocked the door with his body, no one should be able to get in.

So he,

"Ugh..ah....urgh!"

Screamed in pain.

From the pain throughout his entire body.

He cried out against the unbearable pain.

But the pain increased in intensity.

It became even more unpleasant.

It'd be better if he could just go mad.

It'd be better if he could just die if the alternative is this unbearable pain in his body.

The **Hero** is attempting to wake up.

The monster within him is trying to devour Sion from the inside out.

And a voice spoke,

"...The intervals in between are getting shorter and shorter."

Even though there shouldn't be anyone in the office, someone spoke.

Sion looked up.

Lucile was staring at him while sitting on Ryner's desk.

Lucile spoke again,

"...Are you fighting a losing battle?"

Sion looked up, and smiled despite his face contorted in pain.

"No."

"Haha, you can still boast even when it's obvious that you've seen better days?"

"....That's why...that's why you chose me, right?"

Lucile smiled in enjoyment at that, and,

"Yes, that's right."

He said, then,

"You think you can still hold up?"

He asked.

Sion replied,

"If I said no, what would you do?"

"I'll kill you."

Sion laughed.

"Then trying harder is my only choice, isn't it?"

"That's a lie. You would prefer death, right?"

"...."

Sion merely stared at Lucile in silence.

Lucile smiled again,

"....The interval of time between your periods of darkness is really getting shorter. Won't you lose if this keeps up?"

He asked.

And Sion shook his head at that question.

Then,

"I just need a bit more time..."

He said.

"A bit more time before I can control this."

He said.

Lucile opened his eyes slightly and looked down at Sion. He said,

"But you won't be human anymore."

"That's right."

"Surely you have regrets?"

"You're telling me that now?"

"Haha."

Lucile laughed.

And disappeared while laughing.

Sion stared at the space that Lucile occupied a while ago.

He looked at Ryner's desk.

But his eyes gradually saw less and less of the scenery.

Less of the scenery in reality.

And the memories returned again.

Memories of another place.

Memories of another time.

But those were Asruld's memories.

Sion's memories.

Asruld's memories.

Sion's memories.

And his consciousness became muddled.

Asruld and Sion's memories mixed with each other, and he was unable to draw the line between himself and Asruld.

Memories that seemed like they belonged to him began to play themselves out—

"I am..."

Sion said.

"I am..."

Sion said.

And he—

The Story of the Lonesome Demon

Chapter 2

Sion proceeded along the wild plains of the Menoris continent with Milk.

I don't know the reason for my birth. I don't know the reason for my birth.

I don't know the reason for my birth.

"....."

Those thoughts drifted within his head.

Those were the only thoughts that drifted within his head.

The place he found himself in was colorless.

Everything was gray.

There are no scenery, smells or sounds to speak of. It was simply a space covered in gray.

And he was born there.

He was born in a place where everything else was gray.

And within that grayness,

".....Aah."

He whispered.

But no sounds came out.

There existed only a piece of information in his mind, telling him that he had muttered 'aah'.

No sounds came out.

No breath ever escaped those lips of his either.

The air doesn't vibrate, and almost as if everything he does is meaningless — he cannot affect the world in any way.

However, he had knowledge of the world.

Air was in the world.

Colors were in the world.

Sounds were in the world.

Beautiful scenery expanded somewhere else — for some reason, he had those kinds of knowledge.

Even though he can never witness that.

Even though he can never feel that.

"...But I can imagine."

He said.

The Lonesome Demon[Ryner Eris Reed] muttered to himself.

Even his name came from himself.

The lonesome demon.

The lonesome monster.

Even if he labeled himself as 'lonesome', his words won't reach anyone.

So he thought.

Ryner thought,

"....Why was I born?"

He muttered with a face of despair.

And he lifted his beautiful face.

A lazy, bored yet somewhat lonesome face.

As expected, what he saw ahead was gray.

As far as he can see, his vision was filled with gray.

He stood alone.

There's nothing he should do.

There's no one to call out to him.

He was simply there.

He simply existed there.

Without finding the meaning and reason for his birth, he was alone—

"For what..."

And continued to question,

"For what purpose am I..."

He continued to question.

Every once in a while, he'd feel like crying.

He didn't know why he felt that way.

He was alone ever since he was born, so he didn't know why feelings of loneliness would have their place within him.

Even though his chest hurt so much, he couldn't figure out why he felt lonely.

But one thing is for certain — he held feelings of loneliness.

Perhaps it's not a far stretch to say that those were the only things he had within his heart.

He lifted his hand. He looked at his palm and covered his chest with his hand.

Covered his chest that was still hurting.

And,

"....I'm lonely."

He whispered.

"But I don't know why."

He whispered.

"What kind of purpose does this feeling have? Is there some meaning to this?"

He said and lifted his face again.

There was nothing but expanses of gray in front of him, yet he still gazed ahead,

"...If there really is some meaning, then I can endure this. If there is some meaning to this loneliness, then I could hold on for just a little longer...but...if there's no meaning to it..."

If there's no meaning to his own existence.

"Then I'd just want to disappear."

Ryner said.

"It's painful."

With a tearful face.

"...It's painful."

He said.

He widened his eyes.

And he felt something wet fall from his eye.

And,

"....Ah."

He raised his voice. His voice was drowned out in the whirling expanse of gray that encompassed the world, but once again,

"Ah."

He let out a whisper.

And said,

"Tears."

He said, surprised.

He knew that those were tears.

And it was the first time he'd ever cried.

People cry when they're sad.

People cry when they're lonely.

People cry when they're happy — he knew all of that. But that was the first time he'd cried.

So Ryner, taken by surprise, quickly put his hand to his face.

The tear flowed from his left eye.

So he put his left hand there and whispered,

"...Stay."

He poured magic into his fingertip.

And it was done.

A tattoo in the shape of a tear was engraved right below his left eye.

The shape of a tear.

The proof that he'd once cried was engraved.

He didn't know what meaning that tear had, but he'll cherish it nonetheless.

He'll cherish any kind of change in this constant world.

"..."

And if anyone ever came here.

If his existence truly had a purpose, and someone came here for him.

Then he might be able to tell them.

In this place.

In this empty place buried in loneliness.

That he...

"..."

That he had always been lonely — the tear mark will be testament to that.

So he engraved the shape of a tear upon himself.

Below his eye, so it stands out.

Then he lifted his face.

As if wishing to show the tear mark to the whole world.

He lifted his face to show the world the loneliness within.

Then he smiled slightly.

He attempted to smile, so if anyone came for him, he could greet them with a smile.

"...."

But as expected, nothing happened.

Only grayness existed.

Only loneliness existed.

And he will be lonely forever.

"..."

But despite that, Ryner smiled on.

He smiled on, alone in a deserted place.

In preparation for something that might come here eventually.

He smiled on, in preparation for a miracle that might just occur.

For something, or someone compatible with him.

Tearing this grayness apart.

Tearing this darkness apart, that someone would appear before him — thinking such thoughts, he,

"....."

Continued to smile alone.



How much time has passed ever since he started to wander?

One year.

Ten years.

A hundred years.

He didn't know anymore.

But,

"Die."

Sion whispered.

And swung his sword.

His black sword.

In a flash, the sword had slain hundreds of **Goddesses** and destroyed their bodies.

They couldn't even scream.

Because the **Goddesses** saw Sion swinging his sword, and were dead in the next moment.

And there were flakes of blood. Enough to bury the entire land, it seems.

By drinking and drinking the blood of those **Goddesses**, his sword became even darker than when he'd created it.

Sion looked at that sword, and said,

"Disappear."

And the sword did.

The sword disappeared into his body.

And at the same time, he could tell that his own power was growing.

Every time he swung his sword.

Every time he killed a **Goddess**, his own power was growing.

His figure was now different than when he first attained consciousness. He transformed from a young boy into a powerful young man.

Long, silvery hair with sharp, golden eyes.

Even within a sea of blood, he stood with no blood staining him.

He turned around.

And there stood a single **Goddess**.

The **Goddess of Reincarnation**.

Unlike Sion, her appearance didn't change much from when they first met.

Even though a long period of passed since their first meeting, she hadn't changed a single bit.

She still looked like a cute, 14 or 15 year old girl.

She grasped the head of a **Goddess** in her right hand. Her fingertips sunk into the skull of the **Goddess**, and she devoured the **Goddess** from the inside out with her fingers.

She wore a joyful expression each time her fingers throbbed.

She noticed that Sion had turned around, and smiled at him.

"...You're quite the mystery."

She said.

Sion replied,

"How so?"

"You don't eat at all. I've always been watching you, but for all these 220 years, you've been doing nothing but destroying and didn't eat anything."

Sion narrowed his eyes at her words and said,

"...Has it been that long."

"That's not the point."

Milk said and threw the empty **Goddess** away. She closed in upon Sion.

She was short.

No, Sion was the one who grew taller through these 220 years.

So he lowered his head to look at Milk.

Milk always smiled happily. Smiled joyfully. And looked up at Sion with her bewitching face,

"But I really don't get tired of looking at you."

She said and lightly placed her hand on Sion's chest. She pushed her hand into him.

Milk's hand was attempting to devour the flesh of Sion's chest, the insides of his body.

Sion reacted in an instant.

Seven black swords came to existence around him, all pointed towards Milk.

He asked,

"What's the meaning of this?"

Milk looked up at the swords, her happy expression unfaltering.

"I'm testing you."

"Testing me?"

"Yes. To see whether you can defend yourself against me."

Milk said and looked at her own hand. Her hand currently embedded inside Sion's chest.

And,

"It's been more than two hundred years, yet you still cannot defend yourself against my power."

"But I can kill you."

"Yes, me. But if there were twenty **Goddesses** of my level of strength, you'll be killed. You've grown stronger in these two hundred years, but in the end, you're no match for us."

Sion answered while keeping his gaze focused on Milk.

"...But I have yet to encounter a **Goddess** with your level of..."

Milk interrupted,

"They do exist. There are even **Goddesses** who possess much greater and greedier power than me. Because the origin of our power lies in our hunger and desire, and there are many of my kind who are much hungrier than me."

"I see."

"Yes. And you won't be able to defeat them."

"I see."

"Yes, that's why..."

Milk said and pulled out her hand from Sion's chest. She looked at the blood staining her hand and stuck out her tongue. She began licking up the blood.

She wore an entranced expression, and said,

"That's why I never get tired of being with you."

"You say you're a slaughterer. A destroyer who was created to erase **Goddesses**. I wonder, who was it that gave you that kind of order at the moment of your birth?"

Sion answered,

"I was told that I am destruction."

"By who?"

"I don't know. But from the moment I've gained consciousness, I was only interested in destruction."

"That's probably the same as our hunger."

"...."

"We, who are only interested in continuing to eat boundlessly, and you, who cannot find meaning in anything but destruction. But you are weak. If I didn't help you, you'd be dead in an instant."

"....."

"For what have you been born, then? Your power alone won't change anything. Or did the world predict that I'd help you..."

She sprung into action.

She jumped as if to embrace Sion, and actually managed to embrace him a second later.

She extended her hand.

Her hand tightened around the neck of a **Goddess** who suddenly appeared behind Sion.

The **Goddess** attempted to say something, but,

"I have no interest in your words."

Milk said and snapped the neck of the **Goddess**. Then she pierced the neck with her fingers, and began devouring the insides of the **Goddess**.

She began to devour the **Goddess** while still clinging on to Sion.

Sion gazed down at Milk's face. Her face, so close that he could feel by tilting his head just a little.

Apparently, she was once his partner for reproduction.

But now, he didn't feel anything.

He didn't have such feelings.

In the first place, he didn't have any desire save for that of destruction.

So, after looking at Milk's euphoric expression as she ate, he simply turned his eyes to the sky.

No, he wasn't looking at the sky.

He was looking at a space, different from what he currently occupied.

A dimension different from where he was standing right now.

And focused his consciousness upon that spot.

And distortions appeared.

Gray distortions.

Countless ones.

Distortions that led to spaces filled with gray.

It took him more than two hundred years to arrive here.

The Menoris continent was overflowing with **Goddesses**, after all.

It took him some two hundred years to kill, kill, kill the endless waves of **Goddesses** that appeared before he could reach this place.

But he didn't know why he was heading to this place. No, he wasn't the one who suggested coming here in the first place.

So Sion gazed down at Milk again and said,

"And?"

Milk finished her meal, threw away the **Goddess** and detached herself from Sion. She felt her flat tummy and said,

"That wasn't nearly enough."

She smiled.

Looking at her, Sion repeated his question.

"And?"

Milk looked at him.

"And what?"

"Just what did we come here for?"

Milk raised her head and looked up at the skies.

At the gray distortions that lead to another dimension.

She said,

"Can you see that?"

"Yes."

"What do you think those are?"

"I don't know."

"They're prisons, apparently."

"Prisons?"

"Yes. Prisons made by the **Goddesses** who dwelled in the south. No, it might not be completely right to call them prisons."

"What are you talking about?"

"Anyways, they're on the outskirts of somewhere not here. Spots that lead to places that don't lead anywhere. Once you're shoved in there, you won't be able to come back to this side anymore. That's where the **Goddesses** who are banished from this world get sent to."

Milk said.

And Sion looked up at the area with those countless gray distortions again.

Those distortions varied in sizes, but it seems like none of them led anywhere.

Sion raised his right hand and created a black sword from it. He released his sword. It flew towards one of those distortions and pierced it.

However.

"..."

Nothing happened.

The sword pierced the distortion and simply passed through it.

But not towards the 'other side' of the distortion.

Not the dimension where **Goddesses** are banished to.

It simply passed through to the sky on the other side of the distortion.

Sion vanished his sword.

"I can't cut it."

Milk smiled,

"Of course. That distortion may appear on the outside, but we can't touch it from here. So it's been used to banish mad **Goddesses**."

She said.

Mad **Goddesses**.

Mad **Goddesses**.

Sion tilted his head a little,

"You mean me?"

He asked.

Milk shook her head.

"You don't eat at all. So you're no longer a **Goddess**, right? But **Goddesses** are the ones who are banished to there. **Goddesses** whose desire have grown too strong. **Goddesses** who attempt to eat their own kind."

Sion said,

"You."

"Ahaha, that's right. **Goddesses** who start eating their own kind are called mad and hated by everyone. If they found me, I might get banished."

"You are mad."

"That might be true. But maybe that's not the case. I stood by your side to confirm it, for once and all."

"..."

"Ever since I began devouring my own kind for your sake, I've been released. I found a meaning to my existence even within this continuing curse of hunger. As the one who protects and watches over you-"

Milk said.

But Sion replied,

"I have no interest in you."

"Aha, isn't that what I just said to the **Goddess** I killed and devoured?"

He ignored her and continued,

"But I'm interested in that space. Why did you take me here?"

He said.

And remembered.

His first meeting with Milk. What she said when she directed him towards the south.

That was a distant memory.

A distant, distant memory, but...

—It's just a rumor, but...

—Apparently there's a hated one in the south.

—But if he's despised by the **Goddesses**, maybe he'll become your comrade?

Milk said such things.

But in reality, those who were so despised by the **Goddesses** that they were banished to that place are just **Goddesses** who devoured their own kind.

Just like Milk.

And that...

"Isn't me."

Sion whispered.

"Or my comrade."

Sion whispered.

Then he looked at Milk,

"....Did you come here to search for a **Goddess** of your own kind?"

He said.

"If so, then this journey has been meaningless to me."

He said.

Then he doubled the swords around him.

To fourteen.

If he had fourteen swords, it should be possible to kill Milk without giving her a chance to fight back.

So he simply created the necessary amount of power.

Milk looked up at them and still smiled happily.

"My, my, you're going to kill me once I've outlived my usefulness?"

"I am destruction."

"But you still can't deal with the other **Goddesses** if I'm not at your..."

He unleashed one sword.

That sword pierced Milk's chest.

"Ah."

Milk said and looked at her chest. Then she looked at him,

"It's stuck in me."

She said.

"But you could've killed me in an instant if you wished. Why didn't you do that?"

Sion looked at Milk,

"...."

He looked at her,

"I don't know."

He said.

He felt like the same conversation happened a long time ago as well. He tried to kill Milk, but didn't. Though he's made for destruction alone, he can't seem to kill this woman.

And,

"...."

And there's meaning to this, Milk claimed. There's meaning to having attained feelings, going wayward from the program.

And.

"Was there meaning to me coming here as well?"

Sion asked, and Milk said while pulling out the sword embedded in her chest.

"Yes. I've told you this before, but you might find a comrade of yours here."

"Comrade?"

"Yes. See, over there."

Milk looked up at the sky again. She pointed at a specific place.

Sion looked beyond.

And as he'd expected, there was a gray distortion.

It was a distortion not so different from the other ones. A distortion that seemed the same as countless others.

But Milk pointed at that spot unfalteringly and said.

"Because all the banished **Goddesses** were strong, sacrifices needed to be made for their banishment. And once a **Goddess** had been successfully banished by ten of us putting their lives on the line, there should be some residual information

on each distortion. Information distributed throughout the shared consciousness of us **Goddesses**."

Sion said,

"There is no such information within me."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"So you've truly become something completely different from **Goddesses**."

"You have information like that in you?"

"Yes. In the two hundred or so years I've been wandering with you, fifteen **Goddesses** have been banished here — I have such a piece of information. And I even know the names of those **Goddesses**. But for one reason or another, there's no information concerning that distortion..."

She said and looked up.

She was still pointing at that one distortion.

Sion looked up at that distortion again.

But it still looked no different from the other ones.

Milk continued,

"And there were plenty of rumors. What if the ancestor of all **Goddesses** was sealed in there, or what if some monster from another dimension was residing in there. The most recent ones are of a monster despised by the world who lived in there, a monster by the name of Ryner Eris Reed. But for some reason, nobody knew where the rumor originated from."

"And those are pieces of information exchanged between the consciousness of **Goddesses**?"

"Yes. But nobody knew which **Goddess** spread that piece of rumor. Out of the blue, it just started circulating by itself—"

She turned towards him and said,

"But isn't this rather interesting? Two unusual phenomena happened right before my eyes. The **Goddess** who was supposed to be my reproductive partner suddenly awakened to a new consciousness and lashed out. And almost at the same time, information of unknown origin concerning 'Ryner Eris Reed' began circulating in my consciousness. These two things happened simultaneously."

"Simultaneously?"

"Yes. Simultaneously. So I tried guiding you this far. I thought, maybe it's my mission to guide an outcast like you to the monster despised by the world. So, do you feel anything?"

Sion answered,

"No."

"Ahaha, I see."

"Ah."

"Well, seems like things just won't go that smoothly."

Milk said and gazed at him. For some reason, he could feel murderous intent radiating from within her.

Sion said,

"You're trying to kill me?"

"I wonder."

"You can't win against me."

"By myself, yes. But I find strength in numbers. I called my friends. I'll kill you here."

"You can't."

Milk smiled,

"If I couldn't, I'll just banish you. To the other side of that gray distortion—"

She said.

That seemed to be her objective all along. She was trying to banish Sion into the gray distortion.

"So in the end, you're my enemy."

Sion said.

Milk replied,

"I'm on your side. But I think your fate is connected to the other side of that distortion."

"Rubbish."

"You won't know till you've tried. Well, enough of the talk. I'll banish you from here."

And Sion,

"You can't."

Replied those same words.

He then created swords around him. Their numbers easily surpassed a hundred.

The **Goddesses** couldn't even come near him—

But suddenly, a voice rang out behind him.

«So you are Asruld Roland. I've been waiting.»

Sion turned around.

And there stood a **Goddess**, beautiful like Milk.

And it wasn't just one of them. Countless **Goddesses** stood there, and a few of them even possessed power that far surpassed Milk's.

Sion commanded his swords,

"Kill the **Goddesses**."

And all the swords sprung into action at the same time.

They began to assault the **Goddesses** around him.

The **Goddesses'** reactions differed from one to another.

Ones who couldn't dodge and were destroyed.

Ones who evaded them easily.

Ones who even caught the swords and threw them back.

Sion widened his eyes. The sword he himself unleashed now pierced his left shoulder,

"Gah."

He groaned.

But the **Goddesses** attacks didn't stop there. All of them took advantage the instant that Sion faltered and assaulted him all at once.

"Shit."

Sion created swords again.

In his two hands.

And he swung them around, tearing apart **Goddesses**.

But he couldn't keep it up for long.

The numbers were too overwhelming.

And there were a few of them who were stronger than him.

The battle was lost before it even began.

So he began to lose power gradually. He struggled as hard as he could and cut away at the **Goddesses** that assaulted him, but his power began to dwindle.

And his knees hit the ground.

He collapsed.

The **Goddesses** attacked him like they'd just found an excellent bait, and sank their teeth into his legs, arms and insides, tearing them apart.

And,

"..."

He knew that he'd die.

He knew that he'd die right here.

And one **Goddess** appeared before Sion's face.

Looking at him with what could be called pity, mingled with a tiny bit of expectation,

"Now, the preparations are complete."

She said.

He looked up with his drooping eyes and could see that she was Milk.

Milk said,

"If you died here, then I guess there's no meaning to you after all. These two hundred years, and even my own existence, would lose their meaning. But if something happened here, if something special happened—"

She said while carrying the black sword that Sion just struck her with.

She raised the sword up and threw it into the sky.

He didn't know where she threw it to.

He didn't know where she threw the sword to.

But after throwing the sword, Milk said in a voice much like whispering,

"...Ah."

She looked down at him happily.

"It seems like you're not meant to die here."

After hearing her whispers, Sion lost his consciousness.



As expected, nothing happened there.

An expanse of gray, gray, gray and continued infinitely.

Ryner kept on smiling within that loneliness.

He looked up at emptiness and continued to smile.

He wouldn't cry anymore.

Because the shape of a tear was already engraved below his eye.

And if someone actually came to greet him, he wouldn't want to be thought of as gloomy or lonesome.

Someone he's been waiting for.

Something he's been waiting for.

A fate he's been waiting for.

He wanted to greet them with a smile, he thought.

And,

"...But nobody's coming."

He muttered while smiling.

Even he didn't know how long he stood like that.

Because he's always been like that since the moment of his birth.

Because ever since he's been granted life in this world, he's been waiting for someone while glancing up at the sky — the gray sky.

So he said,

"Should I stop hoping?"

While smiling.

"Should I just look down and give up on everything?"

He said.

"It's painful to hope. It's painful to hope, even for a little bit longer..."

Should I just give up on myself, he thought.

"..."

Just when he,

"..."

Just when Ryner was about to give up on everything and look down,

The gray scenery was suddenly torn apart by something.

I don't know the reason for my birth. I don't know the reason for my birth.

I don't know the reason for my birth.

"....."

Those thoughts drifted within his head.

Those were the only thoughts that drifted within his head.

The place he found himself in was colorless.

Everything was gray.

There are no scenery, smells or sounds to speak of. It was simply a space covered in gray.

And he was born there.

He was born in a place where everything else was gray.

And within that grayness,

".....Aah."

He whispered.

But no sounds came out.

There existed only a piece of information in his mind, telling him that he had muttered 'aah'.

No sounds came out.

No breath ever escaped those lips of his either.

The air doesn't vibrate, and almost as if everything he does is meaningless — he cannot affect the world in any way.

However, he had knowledge of the world.

Air was in the world.

Colors were in the world.

Sounds were in the world.

Beautiful scenery expanded somewhere else — for some reason, he had those kinds of knowledge.

Even though he can never witness that.

Even though he can never feel that.

"...But I can imagine."

He said.

The Lonesome Demon[Ryner Eris Reed] muttered to himself.

Even his name came from himself.

The lonesome demon.

The lonesome monster.

Even if he labeled himself as 'lonesome', his words won't reach anyone.

So he thought.

Ryner thought,

"....Why was I born?"

He muttered with a face of despair.

And he lifted his beautiful face.

A lazy, bored yet somewhat lonesome face.

As expected, what he saw ahead was gray.

As far as he can see, his vision was filled with gray.

He stood alone.

There's nothing he should do.

There's no one to call out to him.

He was simply there.

He simply existed there.

Without finding the meaning and reason for his birth, he was alone—

"For what..."

And continued to question,

"For what purpose am I..."

He continued to question.

Every once in a while, he'd feel like crying.

He didn't know why he felt that way.

He was alone ever since he was born, so he didn't know why feelings of loneliness would have their place within him.

Even though his chest hurt so much, he couldn't figure out why he felt lonely.

But one thing is for certain — he held feelings of loneliness.

Perhaps it's not a far stretch to say that those were the only things he had within his heart.

He lifted his hand. He looked at his palm and covered his chest with his hand.

Covered his chest that was still hurting.

And,

"....I'm lonely."

He whispered.

"But I don't know why."

He whispered.

"What kind of purpose does this feeling have? Is there some meaning to this?"

He said and lifted his face again.

There was nothing but expanses of gray in front of him, yet he still gazed ahead,

"...If there really is some meaning, then I can endure this. If there is some meaning to this loneliness, then I could hold on for just a little longer...but...if there's no meaning to it..."

If there's no meaning to his own existence.

"Then I'd just want to disappear."

Ryner said.

"It's painful."

With a tearful face.

"...It's painful."

He said.

He widened his eyes.

And he felt something wet fall from his eye.

And,

"....Ah."

He raised his voice. His voice was drowned out in the whirling expanse of gray that encompassed the world, but once again,

"Ah."

He let out a whisper.

And said,

"Tears."

He said, surprised.

He knew that those were tears.

And it was the first time he'd ever cried.

People cry when they're sad.

People cry when they're lonely.

People cry when they're happy — he knew all of that. But that was the first time he'd cried.

So Ryner, taken by surprise, quickly put his hand to his face.

The tear flowed from his left eye.

So he put his left hand there and whispered,

"...Stay."

He poured magic into his fingertip.

And it was done.

A tattoo in the shape of a tear was engraved right below his left eye.

The shape of a tear.

The proof that he'd once cried was engraved.

He didn't know what meaning that tear had, but he'll cherish it nonetheless.

He'll cherish any kind of change in this constant world.

"..."

And if anyone ever came here.

If his existence truly had a purpose, and someone came here for him.

Then he might be able to tell them.

In this place.

In this empty place buried in loneliness.

That he...

" ... "

That he had always been lonely — the tear mark will be testament to that.

So he engraved the shape of a tear upon himself.

Below his eye, so it stands out.

Then he lifted his face.

As if wishing to show the tear mark to the whole world.

He lifted his face to show the world the loneliness within.

Then he smiled slightly.

He attempted to smile, so if anyone came for him, he could greet them with a smile.

" "

But as expected, nothing happened.

Only grayness existed.

Only loneliness existed.

And he will be lonely forever.

" ... "

But despite that, Ryner smiled on.

He smiled on, alone in a deserted place.

In preparation for something that might come here eventually.

He smiled on, in preparation for a miracle that might just occur.

For something, or someone compatible with him.

Tearing this grayness apart.

Tearing this darkness apart, that someone would appear before him — thinking such thoughts, he,

"...."

Continued to smile alone.



How much time has passed ever since he started to wander?

One year.

Ten years.

A hundred years.

He didn't know anymore.

But,

"Die."

Sion whispered.

And swung his sword.

His black sword.

In a flash, the sword had slain hundreds of **Goddesses** and destroyed their bodies.

They couldn't even scream.

Because the **Goddesses** saw Sion swinging his sword, and were dead in the next moment.

And there were flakes of blood. Enough to bury the entire land, it seems.

By drinking and drinking the blood of those **Goddesses**, his sword became even darker than when he'd created it.

Sion looked at that sword, and said,

"Disappear."

And the sword did.

The sword disappeared into his body.

And at the same time, he could tell that his own power was growing.

Every time he swung his sword.

Every time he killed a **Goddess**, his own power was growing.

His figure was now different than when he first attained consciousness. He transformed from a young boy into a powerful young man.

Long, silvery hair with sharp, golden eyes.

Even within a sea of blood, he stood with no blood staining him.

He turned around.

And there stood a single **Goddess**.

The **Goddess of Reincarnation**.

Unlike Sion, her appearance didn't change much from when they first met.

Even though a long period of passed since their first meeting, she hadn't changed a single bit.

She still looked like a cute, 14 or 15 year old girl.

She grasped the head of a **Goddess** in her right hand. Her fingertips sunk into the skull of the **Goddess**, and she devoured the **Goddess** from the inside out with her fingers.

She wore a joyful expression each time her fingers throbbed.

She noticed that Sion had turned around, and smiled at him.

"...You're quite the mystery."

She said.

Sion replied,

"How so?"

"You don't eat at all. I've always been watching you, but for all these 220 years, you've been doing nothing but destroying and didn't eat anything."

Sion narrowed his eyes at her words and said,

"...Has it been that long."

"That's not the point."

Milk said and threw the empty **Goddess** away. She closed in upon Sion.

She was short.

No, Sion was the one who grew taller through these 220 years.

So he lowered his head to look at Milk.

Milk always smiled happily. Smiled joyfully. And looked up at Sion with her bewitching face,

"But I really don't get tired of looking at you."

She said and lightly placed her hand on Sion's chest. She pushed her hand into him.

Milk's hand was attempting to devour the flesh of Sion's chest, the insides of his body.

Sion reacted in an instant.

Seven black swords came to existence around him, all pointed towards Milk.

He asked,

"What's the meaning of this?"

Milk looked up at the swords, her happy expression unfaltering.

"I'm testing you."

"Testing me?"

"Yes. To see whether you can defend yourself against me."

Milk said and looked at her own hand. Her hand currently embedded inside Sion's chest.

And,

"It's been more than two hundred years, yet you still cannot defend yourself against my power."

"But I can kill you."

"Yes, me. But if there were twenty **Goddesses** of my level of strength, you'll be killed. You've grown stronger in these two hundred years, but in the end, you're no match for us."

Sion answered while keeping his gaze focused on Milk.

"...But I have yet to encounter a **Goddess** with your level of..."

Milk interrupted,

"They do exist. There are even **Goddesses** who possess much greater and greedier power than me. Because the origin of our power lies in our hunger and desire, and there are many of my kind who are much hungrier than me."

"I see."

"Yes. And you won't be able to defeat them."

"I see."

"Yes, that's why..."

Milk said and pulled out her hand from Sion's chest. She looked at the blood staining her hand and stuck out her tongue. She began licking up the blood.

She wore an entranced expression, and said,

"That's why I never get tired of being with you."

"You say you're a slaughterer. A destroyer who was created to erase **Goddesses**. I wonder, who was it that gave you that kind of order at the moment of your birth?"

Sion answered,

"I was told that I am destruction."

"By who?"

"I don't know. But from the moment I've gained consciousness, I was only interested in destruction."

"That's probably the same as our hunger."

"...."

"We, who are only interested in continuing to eat boundlessly, and you, who cannot find meaning in anything but destruction. But you are weak. If I didn't help you, you'd be dead in an instant."

"....."

"For what have you been born, then? Your power alone won't change anything. Or did the world predict that I'd help you..."

She sprung into action.

She jumped as if to embrace Sion, and actually managed to embrace him a second later.

She extended her hand.

Her hand tightened around the neck of a **Goddess** who suddenly appeared behind Sion.

The **Goddess** attempted to say something, but,

"I have no interest in your words."

Milk said and snapped the neck of the **Goddess**. Then she pierced the neck with her fingers, and began devouring the insides of the **Goddess**.

She began to devour the **Goddess** while still clinging on to Sion.

Sion gazed down that Milk's face. Her face, so close that he could feel by tilting his head just a little.

Apparently, she was once his partner for reproduction.

But now, he didn't feel anything.

He didn't have such feelings.

In the first place, he didn't have any desire save for that of destruction.

So, after looking at Milk's euphoric expression as she ate, he simply turned his eyes to the sky.

No, he wasn't looking at the sky.

He was looking at a space, different from what he currently occupied.

A dimension different from where he was standing right now.

And focused his consciousness upon that spot.

And distortions appeared.

Gray distortions.

Countless ones.

Distortions that led to spaces filled with gray.

It took him more than two hundred years to arrive here.

The Menoris continent was overflowing with **Goddesses**, after all.

It took him some two hundred years to kill, kill, kill the endless waves of **Goddesses** that appeared before he could reach this place.

But he didn't know why he was heading to this place. No, he wasn't the one who suggested coming here in the first place.

So Sion gazed down at Milk again and said,

"And?"

Milk finished her meal, threw away the **Goddess** and detached herself from Sion. She felt her flat tummy and said,

"That wasn't nearly enough."

She smiled.

Looking at her, Sion repeated his question.

"And?"

Milk looked at him.

"And what?"

"Just what did we come here for?"

Milk raised her head and looked up at the skies.

At the gray distortions that lead to another dimension.

She said,

"Can you see that?"

"Yes."

"What do you think those are?"

"I don't know."

"They're prisons, apparently."

"Prisons?"

"Yes. Prisons made by the **Goddesses** who dwelled in the south. No, it might not be completely right to call them prisons."

"What are you talking about?"

"Anyways, they're on the outskirts of somewhere not here. Spots that lead to places that don't lead anywhere. Once you're shoved in there, you won't be able to come back to this side anymore. That's where the **Goddesses** who are banished from this world get sent to."

Milk said.

And Sion looked up at the area with those countless gray distortions again.

Those distortions varied in sizes, but it seems like none of them led anywhere.

Sion raised his right hand and created a black sword from it. He released his sword. It flew towards one of those distortions and pierced it.

However.

"..."

Nothing happened.

The sword pierced the distortion and simply passed through it.

But not towards the 'other side' of the distortion.

Not the dimension where **Goddesses** are banished to.

It simply passed through to the sky on the other side of the distortion.

Sion vanished his sword.

"I can't cut it."

Milk smiled,

"Of course. That distortion may appear on the outside, but we can't touch it from here. So it's been used to banish mad **Goddesses**."

She said.

Mad **Goddesses**.

Mad **Goddesses**.

Sion tilted his head a little,

"You mean me?"

He asked.

Milk shook her head.

"You don't eat at all. So you're no longer a **Goddess**, right? But **Goddesses** are the ones who are banished to there. **Goddesses** whose desire have grown too strong. **Goddesses** who attempt to eat their own kind."

Sion said,

"You."

"Ahaha, that's right. **Goddesses** who start eating their own kind are called mad and hated by everyone. If they found me, I might get banished."

"You are mad."

"That might be true. But maybe that's not the case. I stood by your side to confirm it, for once and all."

"..."

"Ever since I began devouring my own kind for your sake, I've been released. I found a meaning to my existence even within this continuing curse of hunger. As the one who protects and watches over you—"

Milk said.

But Sion replied,

"I have no interest in you."

"Aha, isn't that what I just said to the **Goddess** I killed and devoured?"

He ignored her and continued,

"But I'm interested in that space. Why did you take me here?"

He said.

And remembered.

His first meeting with Milk. What she said when she directed him towards the south.

That was a distant memory.

A distant, distant memory, but...

—It's just a rumor, but...

—Apparently there's a hated one in the south.

—But if he's despised by the **Goddesses**, maybe he'll become your comrade?

Milk said such things.

But in reality, those who were so despised by the **Goddesses** that they were banished to that place are just **Goddesses** who devoured their own kind.

Just like Milk.

And that...

"Isn't me."

Sion whispered.

"Or my comrade."

Sion whispered.

Then he looked at Milk,

"....Did you come here to search for a **Goddess** of your own kind?"

He said.

"If so, then this journey has been meaningless to me."

He said.

Then he doubled the swords around him.

To fourteen.

If he had fourteen swords, it should be possible to kill Milk without giving her a chance to fight back.

So he simply created the necessary amount of power.

Milk looked up at them and still smiled happily.

"My, my, you're going to kill me once I've outlived my usefulness?"

"I am destruction."

"But you still can't deal with the other **Goddesses** if I'm not at your..."

He unleashed one sword.

That sword pierced Milk's chest.

"Ah."

Milk said and looked at her chest. Then she looked at him,

"It's stuck in me."

She said.

"But you could've killed me in an instant if you wished. Why didn't you do that?"

Sion looked at Milk,

"...."

He looked at her,

"I don't know."

He said.

He felt like the same conversation happened a long time ago as well. He tried to kill Milk, but didn't. Though he's made for destruction alone, he can't seem to kill this woman.

And,

"...."

And there's meaning to this, Milk claimed. There's meaning to having attained feelings, going wayward from the program.

And.

"Was there meaning to me coming here as well?"

Sion asked, and Milk said while pulling out the sword embedded in her chest.

"Yes. I've told you this before, but you might find a comrade of yours here."

"Comrade?"

"Yes. See, over there."

Milk looked up at the sky again. She pointed at a specific place.

Sion looked beyond.

And as he'd expected, there was a gray distortion.

It was a distortion not so different from the other ones. A distortion that seemed the same as countless others.

But Milk pointed at that spot unfalteringly and said.

"Because all the banished **Goddesses** were strong, sacrifices needed to be made for their banishment. And once a **Goddess** had been successfully banished by ten of us putting their lives on the line, there should be some residual information on each distortion. Information distributed throughout the shared consciousness of us **Goddesses**."

Sion said,

"There is no such information within me."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"So you've truly become something completely different from **Goddesses**."

"You have information like that in you?"

"Yes. In the two hundred or so years I've been wandering with you, fifteen **Goddesses** have been banished here — I have such a piece of information. And I even know the names of those **Goddesses**. But for one reason or another, there's no information concerning that distortion..."

She said and looked up.

She was still pointing at that one distortion.

Sion looked up at that distortion again.

But it still looked no different from the other ones.

Milk continued,

"And there were plenty of rumors. What if the ancestor of all **Goddesses** was sealed in there, or what if some monster from another dimension was residing in there. The most recent ones are of a monster despised by the world who lived in there, a monster by the name of Ryner Eris Reed. But for some reason, nobody knew where the rumor originated from."

"And those are pieces of information exchanged between the consciousness of **Goddesses**?"

"Yes. But nobody knew which **Goddess** spread that piece of rumor. Out of the blue, it just started circulating by itself—"

She turned towards him and said,

"But isn't this rather interesting? Two unusual phenomena happened right before my eyes. The **Goddess** who was supposed to be my reproductive partner suddenly awakened to a new consciousness and lashed out. And almost at the same time, information of unknown origin concerning 'Ryner Eris Reed' began circulating in my consciousness. These two things happened simultaneously."

"Simultaneously?"

"Yes. Simultaneously. So I tried guiding you this far. I thought, maybe it's my mission to guide an outcast like you to the monster despised by the world. So, do you feel anything?"

Sion answered,

"No."

"Ahaha, I see."

"Ah."

"Well, seems like things just won't go that smoothly."

Milk said and gazed at him. For some reason, he could feel murderous intent radiating from within her.

Sion said,

"You're trying to kill me?"

"I wonder."

"You can't win against me."

"By myself, yes. But I find strength in numbers. I called my friends. I'll kill you here."

"You can't."

Milk smiled,

"If I couldn't, I'll just banish you. To the other side of that gray distortion—"

She said.

That seemed to be her objective all along. She was trying to banish Sion into the gray distortion.

"So in the end, you're my enemy."

Sion said.

Milk replied,

"I'm on your side. But I think your fate is connected to the other side of that distortion."

"Rubbish."

"You won't know till you've tried. Well, enough of the talk. I'll banish you from here."

And Sion,

"You can't."

Replied those same words.

He then created swords around him. Their numbers easily surpassed a hundred.

The **Goddesses** couldn't even come near him—

But suddenly, a voice rang out behind him.

«So you are Asruld Roland. I've been waiting.»

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And there were a few of them who were stronger than him.

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And his knees hit the ground.

He collapsed.

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And,

"..."

He knew that he'd die.

He knew that he'd die right here.

And one **Goddess** appeared before Sion's face.

Looking at him with what could be called pity, mingled with a tiny bit of expectation,

"Now, the preparations are complete."

She said.

He looked up with his drooping eyes and could see that she was Milk.

Milk said,

"If you died here, then I guess there's no meaning to you after all. These two hundred years, and even my own existence, would lose their meaning. But if something happened here, if something special happened—"

She said while carrying the black sword that Sion just struck her with.

She raised the sword up and threw it into the sky.

He didn't know where she threw it to.

He didn't know where she threw the sword to.

But after throwing the sword, Milk said in a voice much like whispering,

"...Ah."

She looked down at him happily.

"It seems like you're not meant to die here."

After hearing her whispers, Sion lost his consciousness.





As expected, nothing happened there.

An expanse of gray, gray, gray and continued infinitely.

Ryner kept on smiling within that loneliness.

He looked up at emptiness and continued to smile.

He wouldn't cry anymore.

Because the shape of a tear was already engraved below his eye.

And if someone actually came to greet him, he wouldn't want to be thought of as gloomy or lonesome.

Someone he's been waiting for.

Something he's been waiting for.

A fate he's been waiting for.

He wanted to greet them with a smile, he thought.

And,

"...But nobody's coming."

He muttered while smiling.

Even he didn't know how long he stood like that.

Because he's always been like that since the moment of his birth.

Because ever since he's been granted life in this world, he's been waiting for someone while glancing up at the sky — the gray sky.

So he said,

"Should I stop hoping?"

While smiling.

"Should I just look down and give up on everything?"

He said.

"It's painful to hope. It's painful to hope, even for a little bit longer..."

Should I just give up on myself, he thought.

"..."

Just when he,

"..."

Just when Ryner was about to give up on everything and look down,

The gray scenery was suddenly torn apart by something.

The gray scenery was suddenly torn apart by something.

Ryner raised his head at that.

He looked at the sky with an honestly surprised face.

Because he didn't really think that "something" would actually happen.

There shouldn't be anything here.

Nothing should be happening here.

He thought he'd just die after being born into loneliness, not chosen by anyone and without any meaning.

However, the sky before him was torn apart.

Scenery that was once gray was now torn cleanly apart into two.

It was a streak of black.

The gray was torn apart by a black flash, and the dimension distorted.

And this place, which shouldn't have been connected to any place is now connected to some world.

There was color in that world.

There was sound.

There was light.

There was a world that Ryner had never seen before.

Ryner couldn't stop himself,

"Ah...uh, woah."

He couldn't stop himself from letting out a sound.

And his voice actually resounded from his mouth.

"Sound" and "voice", both of which have never existed till this moment, now resounded in his surroundings.

Taken aback, Ryner stared at the sky once again. He widened his eyes and looked up at the dimension's cracks.

He opened his eyes as if everything depended on it, and took in colors, sounds and sceneries.

And somehow, he could feel tears almost pouring out of his eyes. Even though he engraved all his tears upon his cheek, he still felt like crying some more.

But,

"...I can't cry."

He whispered to himself.

"Someone might've come all this way for me, but I might just drive them away if they see me crying."

Ryner whispered to himself.

And made a smile.

He made a seemingly happy smile.

Looking up at the sky, he waited for someone to come.

Waited for someone who opened up the distortion of dimensions to come and take him away.

"...."

He waited.

"..."

He waited.

"...."

But nobody came.

Ryner tilted his head,

".....Maybe"

He said.

"Maybe it's alright for me to go out?"

He said.

Of course, there's no one around him. There has been none ever since he was born, so there was no one to answer his query.

Despite that, Ryner looked around,

".....Can I go out?"

He asked.

"Can I leave this place now?"

He asked.

Hope swelled within him. Maybe someone would answer him. Because the world is now connected. Because this place is now connected to somewhere else, so he thought that somebody might answer his inquiry.

"..."

Of course, there was no answer.

But Ryner took that as consent. He believed the lack of an answer to be consent.

Either way, he couldn't bear it anymore.

He couldn't bear staying alone anymore.

Then there's no way he'd let this chance slip. Even if this action is some sort of taboo, even if the world itself has a rule that prevents him from going out...

He couldn't bear it anymore.

"...I'm going out."

He muttered in a somewhat timid, yet resolved voice.

And just like that, he attempted to kick off the ground with his foot.

To jump into the sky.

He was trying to take a step forward, to escape into another world.

But at that precise moment,

He saw something thrown into this side from the dimension crack.

"....Eh."

He made such a sound at the sight of that.

And was surprised again that his voice actually resounded,

"...Ah."

He said.

And that 'ah' actually emerged from his mouth. From his throat. He touched his throat, which was finally able to produce sounds,

"Ehehe."

Ryner laughed.

And,

"Wait, now's not the time for this."

Looked up at the sky again.

The sky to which something was thrown.

And saw something stuck in the cracks of dimension.

No, it wasn't stuck.

It seemed to be grasping at something on the crack so that it won't fall.

Ryner looked at it and said.

"Wonder what that is."

When he took a closer look, he could see that it's a man cloaked in black. He could see that it's a man clothed in black armor.

So Ryner said,

"Wonder who that is."

Golden hair and golden eyes.

An armor that stained his entire body pitch black.

The man was shouting.

"...."

He was shouting something.

"..."

But in a language that Ryner has never heard before.

"I can't really hear it properly."

He said with a troubled expression.

Then he spread his arms. He moved the gray area surrounding him, returned them, moved them, returned them, rinse and repeat.

He wove equations.

He solved equations.

Those were Ryner's specialties.

Because he'd been weaving and solving equations for a long time, all alone.

Weaving equations, then solving them.

Solving equations, then weaving them.

He fiddled with every kind of equation there is in this world.

And that gave birth to power.

The power to influence the world.

With both hands, he drew signs, letters, magic circles, squares and other kinds of patterns, reorganizing the grayness.

Eventually, a field of immense power was created before him.

An area with power was created.

And Ryner commanded that area,

"Influence the world."

And the area sprang into motion, beginning its influence upon the world.

With Ryner at its center, the equation he created expanded gradually and steadily.

Normally, everything would've been absorbed by the grayness.

Because an equation made of gray cannot repaint a world of gray.

But now, it's different.

Now there were colors aside from gray in front of his eyes.

There was the sky of a previously unknown world, sounds, scenery and man.

So Ryner can expand his power towards them.

Expand the grayness.

And the equation that Ryner had created—

The magic came into contact with the man.

In an instant.

The man's words immediately became comprehensible.

The man shouted things like this,

"Not yet. I can't die here yet."

In a cold voice, all while grasping desperately at the crack,

"I'll kill you all. I am destruction. I'll kill you all."

He shouted.

Ryner tilted his head,

"Kill you all?"

He whispered.

He glanced towards the other side of the crack that the man was holding on to.

He glanced towards the other side of the crack, in hopes of seeing someone aside from the man.

However, it was hidden behind the man's back, and he couldn't really see the scenery that the man saw.

But the man was fighting with something. The man created black swords around him and seemed to be using them to fight with something.

The swords flew.

And he heard some sort of scream.

But at the same time, attacks from the other side assaulted the man's body. They seemed like women's hands. When those hands touched the man's shoulder, it was torn apart, and blood streaked across the sky.

Golden blood.

That blood colored the previously gray world with gold.

"....Aha."

Ryner couldn't stop himself from smiling.

The glittering and spilling blood of the man was simply too pretty, and he couldn't stop himself from smiling.

But the man was making a pained face, so Ryner controlled his smile and said,
"Hey."

There was a hint of nervousness to his voice.

But he didn't think he could do anything about it.

It's the first time he's ever spoken to anyone else.

So even whilst feeling his own anxiety, Ryner said,

"Hey, you."

But the man wouldn't answer.

He was caught up in his battle with something from beyond the cracks and wouldn't answer.

Ryner shook his head.

"No..."

But the man said,

"Sword."

And a sword is created before the man. Because he'd created the sword, he momentarily let down his guard. He let down his guard against whoever he's been fighting till now.

Something's hand attempted to pierce through the man's neck.

Ryner said,

"W-watch ou..."

But the man commanded his sword.

"Kill that monster."

The sword reacted.

The sword covered by darkness flew straight towards him.

Ryner narrowed his eyes.

"..."

Looking at the sword heading towards him, he narrowed his eyes in sadness,

"...Monster...monster...I see, I look like a monster in your world, huh."

He said and easily dodged the sword. It passed beside Ryner's neck and struck the gray floor.

He looked down at that sword,

"...Maybe that's why I'm locked up here, all by myself."

He muttered.

Then he attempted to touch the sword with his hand, and just by that, he knew that the man was greatly weakened.

He felt some mighty power within the man, but it seemed like the man was too weak to actually bring it out right now.

Something assaulted the man.

And the man couldn't resist anymore.

"Shit, shit."

He shouted.

"Shit, shit, shit."

The man shouted.

Ryner looked up at him,

"....Um."

He said in an insecure voice.

"Should I...help?"

And the man said,

"Shit, shit, you monsters, I'll kill you all."

He said.

You monsters, the man said.

And Ryner,

"...Ah."

Withdrew his outstretched hand.

It seemed like the man didn't come here for Ryner.

The man is fighting against everything.

He created black swords in an attempt to tear apart everything around him.

But he wasn't strong enough, his power was dwindling steadily and gradually.

He lost his power to the assaults, and couldn't even maintain his position on the crack of dimensions.

The man's blood splattered.

"Shit, shit, shit."

His golden blood splattered.

And the man fell.

He fell into this side from the crack he was so desperately holding on to.

And that crack began to close.

Someone from the outside world was attempting to close the gap.

Ryner looked at that,

"...Not under my watch."

He said and kicked off the ground.

His body floated upwards, and he moved his hands as he headed towards the dimensional crack in a straight line.

He wove equations.

He solved equations.

He created equations so that this dimensional crack will never close again.

He put his hand into the dimensional crack that was beginning to close. He pulled himself up and looked beyond the dimensional crack.

He saw innumerable women.

They were probably the ones assaulting the black-clothed man. Those women looked at him with surprise evident on their faces.

"What are you."

"Why is there a being at «the ends of time»?"

"Hey, this thing is trying to come over...devour. Devour it and close the dimension."

They exchanged such words.

The women talked amongst themselves, without giving Ryner a chance to introduce himself.

And a few of the women opened their mouths.

Just like that, they attempted to devour him.

However, the instant they bit him, the women's bodies were blasted away.

No, they were blasted into nothingness. Because they simply dissipated like fog without a single fragment remaining.

The women were surprised once again. No, their faces contorted in fear, and,

"What are you."

They asked once again, and Ryner replied,

"Well, I don't actually have the answer to that myself..."

However, a woman interrupted his words,

"You monster."

The next woman spoke up as well.

"You monster."

The woman beside her said so too.

"You monster."

And Ryner went silent.

He wore a sad expression in silence.

But the women continued,

"Eliminate it."

"Shove it into the dimension beyond."

And the women attempted to close the dimensional crack again. They drew up tremendous power and attempted to close the dimensional crack.

But Ryner prevented that with the equations he wove with his fingertips.

He prevented the dimensional crack from closing.

It was a simple matter.

It seemed like the grayness that Ryner had woven till this point held a great amount of power in this world.

The magic that Ryner had solved in solitude seemed to hold an abnormal amount of power in this world.

So it's very easy for him to open up the crack.

However, the women spoke up once again.

"Seal this monster."

"Don't let the monster come to this side."

"The monster."

"The monster."

"The monster."

Hearing those words, Ryner—

"..."

Took his hands off the dimensional crack.

He took his hands off the crack that the women were trying to close.

Because it seemed like he'd only be despised even if he went outside.

But the women realized the extent of Ryner's tremendous power.

So, with faces contorted in fear, they said,

"Gather our comrades. Gather all the **Goddesses**. We're going to use a curse.
The biggest one of them, so that this monster can never come out again."

They shouted as if they were truly looking at an ugly monster.

Ryner took a step back and touched his face.

"...Am I really that ugly..."

He muttered.

"....I've never seriously looked at myself, so I can't tell."

He muttered.

He lifted his face and called out to the women beyond the closing crack in an apologetic voice,

"...I'm sorry for surprising you."

"Seal the monster!"

"I really wanted to get along with you..."

"Seal those monsters!"

"...I'm really sorr...."

But Ryner's voice trailed off.

Because the crack had closed.

And he knew that a special kind of curse is being put on it from the other side. So that this crack will never open again. He knew that a curse is being put on it to prevent it from ever connecting with the other side again.

Ryner looked at that.

He looked at it with a lonesome face.

And,

"...It seems like there's no place for me in the outside world."

He said and looked at the gray-stained world once again.

The gray world he'd been locked into for who knows how long, all alone.

"..."

And he found a black spot in the center of that gray expanse.

A man covered in black and stained in golden blood had fallen into this gray world.

Ryner looked down at him, narrowed his eyes and said,

"...You still alive?"

"..."

But there was no answer.

But Ryner already knew that he was alive. Because he knew everything that was going on in this gray world.

So he changed his question.

Into another inquiry.

He slowly descended upon the black-covered man.

He closed in upon that man who was sprawled across the gray floor.

And he asked.

The question that was most important to Ryner.

"...Hey, since you're here, does that mean that you're despised as well?"

"...."

"...Hey, since you're here, does that mean that you're an outsider, just like me?"

"..."

"...Hey, will you stay here with me forever and ever?"

When the **Lonesome Demon**[Ryner Eris Reed] finished, the man lifted his face.

"...Hey, will you stay here with me forever and ever?"

When the **Lonesome Demon**[Ryner Eris Reed] finished, the man lifted his face.

Upon close inspection, he found that the man had a very beautiful face.

Well, Ryner had never seen another living being before, so he couldn't really tell the difference between what's beautiful and what's not. Despite that, he still thought the man to be beautiful.

Long, silver hair.

Golden eyes.

And a pitch-black armor stained with blood of the same kind of gold in his eyes.

The man looked at him.

He looked straight into Ryner's eyes.

Ryner was close to shaking. At the fact that someone is looking at him.

Someone is recognizing him. He felt like trembling from that fact alone, but he restrained himself.

And he smiled again,

"Hey, nice to meet you."

He said.

And,

"..."

The man didn't reply.

He simply glared at Ryner with his sharp eyes, then stretched out his hand. And,

"...Sword."

He muttered.

And a sword is created in front of the man's hand.

A pitch-black sword.

A sword of darkness, engraved with the "equation" to destroy everything and paint it black.

Ryner looked down at that and said,

"...As you are right now, you cannot even lay a finger on me, y'know?"

"..."

"Hey, let's talk instead. Since we've met each other and all... plus, there's only you and me here..."

But the man released his sword.

The sword dove towards Ryner's chest in a straight line, but Ryner lightly swatted it away.

And the sword was blasted into oblivion.

Because he sent an equation towards the sword that had such an effect.

The man narrowed his eyes.

Looking at the all too obvious difference in power, the man narrowed his eyes.

Having taken in the man's expression, Ryner spoke up once again.

"See? It's all meaningless. So let's stop fighting and talk a little..."

But the man spoke up again,

"...Sword."

And this time, five swords were brought into existence surrounding the man. The power in each one of them is distinctively less than the power in the lone sword just now.

Blood continued to flow from the man sprawled on the ground, staining the gray earth with a beautiful shade of gold.

And the more the golden area expanded, the more power is lost from within the man.

However, the man did not stop his attacks.

He could not stop his impulse of destruction directed towards all of the world.

And Ryner looked at that,

"...I see. Now I know why you were despised in the outside world."

He said and let out a small sigh.

The man commanded his swords,

"Destroy it."

Ryner replied,

"It's impossible."

And he released equations into the five swords. The swords disappeared immediately.

But the man didn't mind, he was simply bent on creating more swords.

Ryner said,

"If you use any more of your power, you'll die, y'know?"

"Sword..."

"Aah, geez. I told you you'd die."

Right then, Ryner reached out his hand. He stretched his fingertip towards the forehead of the man who was trying to create swords. He touched the man's forehead with his finger, and reached deep inside the man's brain.

The man's brain was very warm.

Even though he'd lost so much blood, the man's body still had warmth in it.

The feeling of coming into contact with others, something completely new to Ryner.

He felt like laughing again.

He felt like raising his voice in joy at the prospect that he wasn't alone in this place.

But he restrained himself and said,

"Sleep for a while. Even if you want to kill me, you don't have enough power right now. So just for a little bit..."

And Ryner wove equations.

Equations to ease the tension within the man, and he released them into the man's brain.

He dissolved them.

Synchronized them.

And the man,

"..."

Immediately fell asleep.

Having lost all strength, the man was on the verge of falling, yet Ryner supported him and gently lowered his head to the ground.

He extracted his finger from the man's brain and stood up.

And looking down at the sleeping form of the destroyer,

"Wonder if he's going to attack me again when he wakes up."

He muttered to himself.

"But being attacked by someone...is kind of fun."

He said and smiled thinly.

He took a step a step back and crouched besides the sleeping man. The man's wounds were already closed, because Ryner made it so by weaving equations. However, he can't recover the portion of blood that the man had already lost, so he didn't know how long it's going to take for the man to wake up.

But Ryner listened to the man's snores,

"...There's sound."

He muttered.

Even though the dimensional crack had already closed, it seems like sounds will not disappear from this world.

Everything that this world is composed of has changed.

Is it because the crack came in contact with other worlds?

Or is it because of the man's presence?

And Ryner looked at the man again. The man with a beautiful face was still sleeping.

He looked at the man's face,

"...What was his name? If he had a name, then I'd like to call him by that."

He said.

"There're quite a lot of other things I want to ask him too, I wonder if he'll actually listen to me next time. Well, I don't really mind being killed. Haven't even thought about the possibility."

Because he expected himself to just disappear here, all by himself.

But if somewhere were to attack and kill him,

That would be...

"....Just the thought alone makes me excited."

Ryner placed a hand on his chest and could feel a pulse deep within his chest, much like hope.

Something he didn't have when he was all alone in this gray world.

Yet it was moving now, without a doubt.

He felt that,

"Ahaha."

And laughed to himself again.

His laughter resounded.

His laughter and the man's snores resounded throughout the gray world.

Looking up at the expanding sounds,

"..."

Ryner smiled gently.

The Reason for Existence

Chapter 3

By the time that Sion woke up, the world was covered in gray.

A world where everything was gray.

While scanning his surroundings with his eyes, he attempted to get up, and then,

"...Where..."

He muttered, and someone spoke up beside him.

"Ah, so you've finally awakened?"

Sion turned his face towards that voice. Searing pain assaulted his head, no, his entire body.

He turned his eyes towards the offending areas. He found that the pitch-black armor he wore was stained with golden blood.

His own blood.

Shed when he was attacked by the **Goddesses**.

There were holes all over his armor, but the skin beneath the had already been repaired.

It still hurt, but he could move his arms and feet without any problem. Having confirmed that, Sion lifted his face once again and looked towards the voice.

One man was standing there.

A man with a strange appearance.

Clown-like clothing and black hair. A gentle face. The shape of a tear engraved upon his cheek.

Looking at that man, Sion said,

"Who are you?"

The man looked slightly surprised, and said,

"When you saw me before, you said I was a monster... do I not seem like a monster to you?"

Sion answered the question,

"I said that?"

"Yes."

"I don't remember."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"Well, it has been about a hundred years since you've lost consciousness."

"Hundred?"

"Yeah."

"I've been sleeping for a hundred years?"

"Yes. Because your wounds were simply that deep. To be more exact, it's 178 years and 48 days... huh, maybe I should've said 'about two hundred years'?"

The man said and looked at him.

With a happy smile on his face, the man looked at him.

Sion scowled a bit at that, and scanned his surroundings once again.

This empty expanse of space.

This world filled with nothing but gray.

It's been said that this is a prison made by **Goddesses**, an alternate dimension not connected to the world Sion came from, but...

Sion asked,

"What are you doing here?"

The man answered,

"I've been counting your snores till just now, I guess?"

"What do you mean?"

"But since you've woken up, I've stopped counting your snores and moved on to talking with you."

He said happily.

He smiled innocently.

And that smile seemed to be tinged with a kind of madness.

So Sion said,

"Were you originally a **Goddess** too?"

"Huh?"

"But you went mad and was banished here?"

The man tilted his head at Sion's question,

"Do you know about me?"

He said.

Sion shook his head.

"No."

"Then why are you talking to me as if you knew me?"

"It's just an educated guess. At least in my world, this place was where **Goddesses** who'd gone mad are banished to."

The man nodded with an interested expression.

"Huh."

He said.

Then,

"So, I'm one of them?"

He asked.

Sion returned his inquiry with a question,

"You're not?"

"I don't know. I've been here ever since I've come to my senses."

"When you've come to your senses?"

"Yes, from the very beginning. At least from the very moment that I managed to recognize myself... since then, I've always been alone."

The man said.

And Sion thought, looking at the man who was smiling sheepishly,

So he doesn't even remember his madness.

Or is this creature really not a **Goddess**, but some other being?

But in the end, it doesn't really matter. He himself had gone mad as well. Sion used to be a **Goddess**, but not anymore. He is a consciousness that was created just for the purpose of destruction, and his body had already been recomposed into something different from that of the **Goddesses**.

And even if this creature was a being different from the **Goddesses**, would it even matter?

He's going to destroy everything anyways.

Because Sion was born to destroy everything, **Goddesses** or no.

So he'll destroy this creature.

He'll destroy this gray world as well.

It's necessary to destroy everything, erase everything—

"..."

But right then, the voice of a woman resounded in his head.

It was a memory. A memory from a long time ago.

Within that memory, a strange **Goddess** by the name of Milk had said,

Something about the despised one named Ryner Eris Reed.

About the monster hated by the world.

But she didn't know where rumors of that monster stemmed from. Even though nobody had met it and nobody had seen it, information of a monster who resided on the other side of the dimension, hated by the world, has been passed around.

And at last, Sion came face to face with it.

No, in reality, it was Milk who tried to bring about this meeting.

It seemed like she thought that something interesting would happen if the two of them, both hated and detested, were to meet.

"..."

Sion looked at the man.

He looked at the man who wore clown-like clothing.

The man was smiling.

He was smiling happily, even though nothing interesting was happening.

He had probably gone mad already.

He had probably gone mad already.

But he himself was already broken as a **Goddess**, so he didn't particularly mind.

Sion asked him again,

"Who are you?"

And the man smiled joyfully for some reason. He placed a hand on his chest, and...

"I never thought that someone would ask that of m..."

"Just tell me already. Who are you?"

The man answered while smiling,

"Ryner...Ryner Eris Reed."

"Ryner?"

Hearing that, the man — Ryner looked to be on the verge of crying for some reason. An expression both happy and sad.

And he said,

Ryner said,

"Yes, Ryner. I named myself. But to think that someone would call my name... ah, that's right. Can you tell me your name as well? I want to know yours."

"My name?"

"Yes, your name. What is your name?"

Sion answered,

"I am—"

Asruld answered,

"I am—"

I am—.

Ryner nodded at that.

"Sion, huh. Sion.... what a nice name."

"A nice name?"

"Yes."

Ryner said happily.

Sion tilted his head and replied,

"There's no meaning to a name."

"I wonder?"

"There is none. To begin with, this name isn't even mine."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"So, whose is it?"

"That doesn't matter either."

"Huh, I see."

"Yes."

"Then...then, um, what's something that has meaning? Sorry, I don't really know about the world outside, or whether a topic has meaning or not... can you please tell me?"

Ryner said.

In a voice filled with anxiety.

And Sion looked at Ryner. Looked at the man dressed up as a clown, sprouting the most innocent smile on his face.

And he measured the difference in their powers.

To see whether he could kill Ryner with his power.

To see whether he could destroy Ryner with his power.

He even calculated whether or not he could destroy this gray-filled world and go out.

And he said,

"The only thing that has meaning to me..."

"Okay."

"Is whether I can destroy you or not."

"Huh~ So that's what's meaningful to you?"

"Yes."

"But why is it that important to you?"

"Because I was born that way."

"To destroy me?"

Sion shook his head and said,

"To destroy everything."

Ryner narrowed his eyes and stared at him. He held up his arms, and Sion reacted.

Sion took one step back, and created a sword in his hand in anticipation of Ryner's attack.

But Ryner ignored that and looked at Sion through the cracks between his own fingers.

"I'll try looking for the reason you're here— analyzing existence—"

He muttered.

And several letters and numbers lined up on the surface of Ryner's eyes.

He didn't know what Ryner was doing. He didn't know what kind of meanings those information that surfaced on Ryner's eyes held.

But Sion wasn't interested in their meanings to begin with.

So he struck out with his sword.

Towards that eye.

With his pitch-black sword, he struck out towards that eye with letters and numbers.

But for some reason, Ryner didn't dodge the sword.

Even though the sword is about to pierce his eye, the man dressed up as a clown didn't dodge.

The sword closed in upon his eye.

But Ryner was still smiling.

The sword touched his eye.

But Ryner was still smiling.

The sword struck his eye.

And Ryner,

"Ah, so I really..."

Said in a small voice.

A small yet secretly happy voice,

"Am to be killed here.... that's alright with me... but if I die, you'll be left all alone. All alone in this place. I'm worried about that. Because it's hard to be here. It's hard to be alone. Are you fine being alone he...."

But at that moment, Sion's sword pierced and crushed the eye that held those equations, and emerged from the back of Ryner's head.

And then,

"..."

Ryner's words ceased.

Then Sion's sword pierced through, destroying the eye where the equations were continuously appearing, entering the brain.

Then.

"..."

Ryner stopped talking.

It was his left eye that had been pierced through.

Where the eye ball had been lost, several holes opened and fresh red blood flowed out.

Red blood.

Red blood.

A completely differently coloured blood that was different from Sion's golden blood.

Sion looked at the blood flowing out.

Then Ryner looked at him.

He used that remaining right eye.

He used that black eye that continuously produced equations and words to look at him.

"...Aren't you going to kill me?"

He asked.

Then Sion looked at the sword in his hand.

As long as he used power, killing this person would be an easy job.

As long as he injected power into this sword, destroying Ryner's brain and killing him should be an easy job.

But Sion looked at Ryner and said.

"Why didn't you dodge?"

So Ryner replied.

"Then why didn't you kill me?"

"The one who is asking the questions is me."

"Ah ha, then I'm being interrogated. I have always been here by myself, but now you're asking..."

"Alright, reply me quickly, why didn't you dodge?"

Sion asked.

He asked Ryner whose left eye was still bleeding.

So Ryner replied.

"Because you wanted to kill me, right?"

"That's right."

"If you kill me, you'll be happy right?"

"That's right."

"Then, I thought, even if I'm killed by you, it's fine. If I'm able to make my first friend happy, I felt that was fine..."

"Is that so. Then die."

"Ei."

But Sion didn't let him speak.

Sion wanted to make the swords surround Ryner. In order to destroy Ryner's brain, he filled his sword with power.

But,

"..."

The sword didn't move.

It was as if it was stuck in Ryner's eye, it couldn't move. No, even if it didn't move it was fine, but the equations and words that had been appearing on Ryner's eyeball earlier, were now moving up the sword from the destroyed eyeball.

Sion released the sword and moved back. Then he pulled a sword out from his hand and settled into a fighting posture.

"...What do you want? Didn't you want to die?"

He said.

Then Ryner touched the sword that was pierced through his eyeball and said.

"...Actually, I had thought to do so... but after analyzing you for a short while, I changed my mind."

Then he pulled the sword out.

And blood spurted out again.

Ryner's blood spurted out.

Red blood.

Red blood.

It was different from Sion's blood, it was red-coloured blood.

That red blood flew in the air, but it seemed to gather on the black sword as if it had a mind of its own.

It stirred.

It eroded.

Then Ryner spoke.

He looked towards Sion and said.

"...I have analyzed the reason for your existence."

At this moment, Ryner's left eye had healed, even his eye ball had regenerated. Ryner moved. He moved close to Sion at a speed that Sion could not respond to. Then he grabbed his throat and looked at his eyes.

He looked deep into Sion's eyes.

Ryner's eyes still continued to produce the numbers, words, and symbols.

So Sion said,

"Sword."

Swords appeared in his surroundings, about to stab through Ryner.

But Ryner,

"I don't need this."

He said this softly.

Before the swords could materialize, they disappeared.

There was a stark difference in their power levels.

If that power earlier.

If that power that had destroyed the swords had been aimed at Sion, then Sion would have disappeared.

So,

"..."

Sion gave up resisting.

He understood that he could not destroy the monster in front of him, he gave up resisting.

But Ryner seemed to be very interested as he continued to look deeply into Sion's eyes. He used his eyes that stirred with words and pictures to look at him.

Then,

"Wu~ You, your structure—seems more and more interesting."

Ryner said.

But Sion,

"..."

Didn't reply.

There was no need to reply.

If it was why, then it was because his mission had ended.

Destroy everything in front of him.

Destroy, destroy, destroy everything.

He had been born for this, so when he met something that could not be destroyed, he had no meaning to his life.

So,

"Kill me."

Sion said.

Ryner seemed to smile foolishly and happily.

"I knew you would say that. Because you have been created for that."

"Kill me."

"From the structure, the one who created you was—the Worshipper. But who is the Worshipper? They can draw such a pretty formation... But, I haven't seen them before..."

"Kill me."

"You were created to cut down the high numbers of the Goddesses. Then, if there were a Goddess that were much stronger than you, you would lose your meaning to live, that is what was written..."

"Kill me!"

Sion said.

He didn't want to listen to something meaningless. Because his mission had ended, his meaning to life was gone.

If that was so, then disappear.

According to what Ryner had said, he had been created for that.

But Ryner still smiled warmly then said.

"But I won't let you die. Because you are my friend. Because you are my first friend. Although I do not know what is the **Worshipper**..."

Saying this, he widened his eyes.

He opened his mouth happily, smiling as if he was the devil.

Then a voice emerged from his mouth.

A different, miraculous voice emerged from his mouth.

But he didn't know what that was.

He didn't know what that voice meant.

But he knew that was a curse.

He knew that that was a very very unlucky curse that had been created to curse something in this world.

Then Ryner opened his mouth.

He used a warm, sad, lonely expression but happily said.

"I'll give you a new life. I'll give you a new life that will allow you to escape from that structure. So let the two of us continue living in this world. So that we are not lonely. So that there will be no more despair. I'll give you half of my life."

He said.

Then he raised his right hand.

The sword that had been created to stab Ryner was controlled by Ryner. Then it fell in a straight line and *bang* cut Ryner into half.

But that person still smiled.

His body had been cut into two, but he didn't die and smiled foolishly.

Then that half of that body said.

The half of the body that grabbed onto Sion spoke. It happily, very happily...

No, it tenderly looked at Sion.

"Sa, eat me. This way, you will be able to continue."

"..."

"If you gain my power, you can continue to destroy. You can find the meaning to your existence again."

"..."

"It's a pity I can't rewrite your programme, but I can give you a meaning to life."

"..."

"So, eat me. I will become your sword. I will become the shield that protects you."

Ryner said.

Then Sion raised his head.

"Why do you do this?"

He asked.

Then Ryner laughed and replied,

"Because I want to be with you."

Sion asked in surprise.

"Why do you want to be with me?"

"Because I like you."

"Why do you like me? I don't even know about your situation. I don't like you. But why do you...why do you like me?"

Sion said.

But Ryner continued smiling.

"Because I have always been alone. I have always been here by myself, I wanted to disappear like that. But you appeared. You cut open the space of my grey prison and gave me a meaning."

"Meaning?"

"That's right. The meaning to live. The reason to continue living. The reason to continue existing. So I want to give you this. Sa, eat me. This way, your path will continue, at least within the range where I can destroy things, it will give you a reason to continue living. So..."

"Eat you?"

"Eh."

"Devour your power."

"Yes."

"What will happen to the part of you that is eaten?"

Hearing him ask that, Ryner laughed.

He happily laughed.

He joyfully laughed.

Then he pressed a hand to his chest and said.

"This is the first time someone is concerned for me. I didn't think that it would be such a joyous matter."

"Answer my question."

"Because you are my very very important friend. You don't have to mind. It doesn't matter what I become. If it is able to benefit you, if it is able to help those who need it, I will be happy."

"I can't understand."

"Is it?"

"Yes."

"But, it's like that."

"Is that so."

"Eh."

"In that case."

Sion reached out his hand.

He slowly reached out his hand.

He reached out his hand to Ryner, who was looking at him happily.

Then,

"I'm going to eat you."

"Eh."

"You will become my power."

"Eh. Do it."

"You are."

"Eh"

"You are mine."

Saying this, Sion opened his mouth.

Then Ryner happily laughed.

"From today onwards, we can be together."

"Ah ah."

"I won't be lonely."

"Ah ah."

"Until...until the both of us disintegrate, I will always...be with you...together..."

Then Ryner stopped talking.

Because Sion had eaten his body.

Because Sion had devoured his power.

Then he immediately understood that Ryner's power had entered his body.

He knew that Ryner's feelings had entered his body.

Then he knew how lonely Ryner had been. He knew the feeling of his soul being covered with grey and being unable to find any meaning.

But this ended too.

Ryner who was devoured, was integrated.

"..."

Sion raised his head.

Then he looked at this grey world. He looked at the world where Ryner had been locked up in.

But in this world, Ryner was no longer alone.

Because he was here.

Because he who had ripped an entrance to this world was here.

So Sion took out his sword.

He focused on his right hand and grew a sword. That feeling was different from the past. The nature of the sword and the power in the sword was different from the past.

Just like that, when Sion pulled out a sword that was different from his usual sword.

"..."

He felt it.

In this grey space, there was something else, another existence.

Sion asked.

He asked the other half of Ryner's body.

"Then, how should I call you?"

So the woman that was the half of Ryner's body looked at him.

"...Ferris. The light that opened the darkness, «Ferris Eris». Call me that."

She answered.

"Ferris?"

"Yes."

"That is your name?"

"You can also call me the light that sold out the dark, «Eris»."

"...Which one should I call you then?"

When he asked that, Ferris smiled faintly.

"Any one can do. Didn't you say it before, names have no meaning."

"Is that so."

"Yes."

"In that case, I'll call you Ferris."

"It's up to you."

Ferris said.

Then she looked to the grey sky.

She looked at the grey sky.

"Open that sky. You can do that already."

So Sion looked to the sky. Then he felt that the scenery was different from what he had seen.

It was probably because he had devoured Ryner.

Ryner's power was circling in his body. It spread through his entire body. No, in his mind

"Open your eyes. Go out."

Ryner's voice spoke.

Following that voice, Sion opened his eyes. Then in the middle of that eye, there was suddenly a pattern of a tear that appeared suddenly.

In a moment, the scene surrounding him changed.

Everything in his surroundings started to become notations, graphics and symbols.

He just needed to gently touch them and everything would be destroyed.

But there was one thing that could not be destroyed.

It was the grey sky.

But Sion had the power to destroy the grey.

So,

"...Sword."

He said softly.

Then he reached out his hand.

In that hand, black swords appeared again.

He only used Ryner's eyes to look at the formation of the sword. He knew why the sword had been created and who created it.

That sword had enough power to kill two hundred million **Goddesses**. That meant that after killing two hundred million **Goddesses**, there wouldn't be any power left in the sword.

Then when the sword lost its power, Sion would die to.

That meant that this sword—no,

"...I am an existence meant to reduce the number of **Goddesses**."

He said softly.

And that sword had the name of the person who created Sion.

That person's name was **Worshipper**.

The name **Worshipper** was written as a formula on this sword.

Of course, he had no memory of who that person was, there was no message left on the sword.

But he knew that it was the **Worshipper** who created him and the **Goddesses**.

So,

"...Haha"

Sion laughed.

He could no longer differentiate whether it was his feelings or the feelings of Ryner who had been absorbed. Because Sion had never laughed until now.

But now he,

"...Hahahaha"

Laughed like this.

"Hahahahahahaha"

He laughed happily.

Then he reached a finger toward the sword. He reached a finger towards the structure of the sword.

Just like that, he intervened with the existence of the sword.

Eroded.

Rewrote.

The sword had been set so that it could not kill the **Worshipper**.

—But Sion's sword had been given the power to cut through everything.

The sword had been set to only kill two hundred million **Goddesses**.

—But Sion removed this limit.

Just like that, the more he rewrote the structure of the sword, the darker the sword became until it was completely black.

It was darker than black. Darker than shadow. The sword turned into a color that was deeper than that.

It became more black, more black, more black, because the curses on the sword concentrated, in the end that sword couldn't even be seen.

It had disappeared from sight.

But he knew the sword was still there.

Sion knew.

Although it could not be seen.

Although the power of Ryner's eyes could not even see it.

But the sword was in his hand—

Sion commanded the sword.

«Open it»

Then the sky immediately split into two.

Before this, he could only cut the sky into half, but now, he was so strong that he could cut this space into half.

Cut the sky.

Cut the world.

This world immediately linked with that world.

Then Sion, again,

"...Hahaha"

Laughed.

Ferris, who was behind him asked,

"Are you happy?"

"No."

"Then why do you laugh?"

"It's not me who is laughing."

"Wueh. That means, the Ryner within you is laughing?"

She said. So Sion turned around.

"...Who knows. But Ryner seemed happy that he was able to walk out."

He replied.

Ferris was behind him.

She was an emotionless woman, floating in the air and looking at him.

She used icy blue eyes to look at him, then looked at their surroundings.

"...This is the outside world."

Her eyes started to move.

In her surroundings, was the scene of the world Sion had lived in earlier.

It was a desolate land, covered with the bodies of the **Goddesses** who multiplied unceasingly.

The **Goddesses** looked at them.

They looked at the bodies of Sion and Ferris that had suddenly appeared in the sky through the open space.

Among them, Sion saw a face that he recognized.

It was Milk.

"The Goddess of Reincarnation, «Milk Ephillet»."

Milk looked to them and seemed to want to say something, but before that,

"...The outside world is ugly."

Ferris said.

Sion moved his attention from Milk and looked at Ferris.

Then he said.

"Ryner doesn't think so."

"I'm different from Ryner."

"Is that so?"

"Ah ah. Because most of the feelings have been given to Ryner... My feelings have already, even to feel this world is beautiful is..."

But when Ferris was talking, another **Goddess** other than Ferris flew towards them, opening her mouth, thinking of devouring Ferris.

The **Goddess** had no other interest other than eating.

Ferris looked at her.

"..."

Her hands started to move and dance.

A magical formation was drawn in front of the **Goddess**.

"Burn."

She said.

Then the **Goddess** started to burn.

The **Goddess** disappeared, wailing.

The other **Goddesses** looking on this, noticed that there was something different. They noticed that the person who could kill them had appeared.

It wasn't prey, but it was the enemy.

Then they started to call something.

Using a piercing voice, millions, billions of **Goddesses** seemed to be calling something.

Ferris looked at the **Goddess** on the ground.

"...I see, I know why you use the swords. In order to fight those things, a sword would be most effective. If that is so, then let my power become a sword too."

She said and started to draw magical formations again. She used both her hands to write a large magical structure.

So that her power would become a sword, she drew ceaselessly, finally the magic was complete.

That sword was perfect and complete, it could not integrate into Ferris's body any more. Not only that, it seemed as if Ferris's existence had transferred onto the sword.

A sword that would never be broken.

A sword that would never disappear.

A sword that was made of a white metal.

The sword was so large and big that her slender wrists could not hold them.

Ferris raised that sword, softly saying after she breathed, then,

"...This sword will be called «Eris Reed»."

She said. Then she placed the sword on her shoulder.

Then she looked at Sion.

"Then, can we kill these things?"

She asked.

Sion said.

"Why do you want to do that?"

"Because they're ugly."

"Ha ha ha."

"And your structure says that you are born to kill the **Goddess**."

"That's true."

"In that case, you want to kill the **Goddess**, right?"

Ferris asked.

So Sion replied.

"I want to kill them all."

"Then, let's do that."

"Ah ah. But there's no chance for you to appear on stage."

As he said that, Sion looked towards the land. The crowd of **Goddess** didn't seem to have any intentions of attacking.

But actually, it didn't matter what the other party was thinking.

Sion could only destroy.

«**Shatter**»

He said softly.

Then that transparent sword appeared.

The **Goddesses** probably couldn't see it.

They couldn't see that sword.

But they knew that there was power concentrating at this point.

It was a large power that could destroy everything that was birthed and from the sky, it fell towards the ground,

«**Shatter**»

Fell.

«**Collapse**»

Fell.

«**Destroy**»

Fell.

There was only a "phew—" sound.

There were several thousand **Goddesses** who heard this.

Then this was the last sound that the **Goddesses** heard on this world.

The sword that was filled with Ryner's powers invaded the most important part of the **Goddess's** structure, then Sion's sword pierced through the most important structure.

The **Goddess** whose center of existence were cut became completely unable to maintain their form, they shattered, collapsed and were destroyed.

All the **Goddesses** in Sion's view quickly shattered, aside from one of them, and sank into the earth.

Sion looked at all this, then slowly descended to the ground that was covered with the fragments and blood of the **Goddesses**.

Then he raised his head to the sky and said to Ferris who was looking at all this
"...This way, is the world less ugly?"

He asked.

She used that emotionless cold eyes to look at the corpses of the bodies and replied

"The reason why this place is so ugly does not seem to be because of the presence of the **Goddesses**."

"Is that so."

"This world, has been unnatural even its foundations are so."

"...Wu, then, which part is unnatural?"

Sion said.

Ferris seemed to be slightly surprised, then she faintly laughed.

"That tone... The you of the past wouldn't have that response. Did you change because you absorbed Ryner."

"..."

"Then use your eyes...use Ryner eyes, can't you see the unnaturalness of this world? Everything in this world seems to be made for something."

She said.

So Sion opened his eyes and looked at his surroundings. But he couldn't understand. He couldn't feel the odd feeling that she felt.

But he wanted to destroy everything.

He wanted to destroy everything.

Towards Sion's response, Ferris said.

"You can't feel it... Wuwu. This is slightly interesting. The interior is completely mixed together..."

But her words didn't continue.

A voice from their side interrupted them.

"Ah ha, you've returned."

Ferris turned in the direction of the voice.

"Who is that?"

She asked.

Sion looked to the side and replied.

"It's Milk. The **Goddess** of Reincarnation, «Milk Ephillet»."

Then Milk revealed a flirtatious smile, as she had done so in the past.

"Heh, still remember me, huh."

"More like you, why are you here? From the time I have disappeared since that dimension distortion..."

It should have been more than a hundred and seventy years—when he started to say that, Milk replied.

"It's been a hundred and eighty years."

"..."

"Because to me, who knows nothing else but to eat, there is no difference eating here or anywhere else. But if it's like that, I thought that maybe there would be more interesting things happening, at the same time, wouldn't eating be more interesting?"

"Interesting matters?"

"Yes"

"So you were waiting here for me?"

Hearing this, Milk looked at Sion. Then tilted her head.

"...Earlier, you were talking with that blond monster, right, your personality seemed to have changed."

She said.

But Sion didn't know the answer to this question. The personality he had before, the feelings that Ryner had carried when he was devoured, until now, he had been unable to make sense of them.

But Ryner was moving in his body. When he first saw the air of this world, Ryner had traveled happily, he had traveled happily throughout his body.

Ryner he was slowly becoming one with Sion.

When he laughed happily, Sion couldn't differentiate whether it was Sion or Ryner who was laughing.

Then Ferris said,

Your personality has changed.

Milk said.

Your personality has changed.

If they thought so.

"...If that's what the two of you think, then it's good."

Milk revealed an interested expression.

"Wu~ How should I say this, the events have progressed much differently than I would have thought in a hundred and eighty years... Ma, this is quite interesting. And I thought that there would be a more powerful monster, but what appeared was a different 'hero' who is warm and a blond beauty. What exactly has happened in that dimension distortion..."

As she said that, Milk stopped and turned around.

Then,

"Ah, let's leave this topic for later. The **Goddesses** are calling and they have already began to come and deal with you."

Hearing this, Sion laughed again.

"Deal?"

"Wu."

"Then destroy them."

Saying this, he turned in the direction that Milk was looking in.

Then Sion could feel it too. He could feel in the distance, there were many **Goddesses** using themselves as offerings, they wanted to use a large scale magic.

Then Ferris walked to his side.

"They respond quickly."

"You can see it?"

"Because my eyes are the same as yours. It looks like we're completely hated."

"But I already have the power to destroy everything."

Sion said.

Then he started to analyze the magic that the **Goddesses** wanted to use. He started to create the magical sword that would deal with this.

But in the middle of analyzing,

"...Wu?"

Sion tilted his head.

He looked at the magic that was developing on the other side

"Why are they making another dimension magic? Don't they want to kill me?"

He asked.

This was obvious, but no one answered.

Only Milk said a sentence.

"Ah, amazing... even my power was used... all of the **Goddesses'** powers are used on this magic..."

Sion looked at Milk, then he started to intervene in the magic that the **Goddesses** were using. He made a sword and planned to sever this magic.

But before that,

"That is useless."

A voice spoke.

But there was no sign of its owner.

Not, that voice was on a different level.

It was from that other dimension.

So Sion looked in the direction of that other dimension. Then he reached out a hand, thinking to enter the other dimension.

But the voice spoke again.

"...Didn't I say this is useless. Because this is our world."

The voice that treated Sion and the other like idiots spoke again.

The owner of that voice looked at Sion.

Then what was there was different from the **Goddesses**.

Different from the **Hero**.

Different from the **Lonely Demon**.

This was a completely new and an existence with a different equation.

That person laughed.

It laughed as it looked here.

Sion looked at that person. But he could not see his structure clearly. He could not understand how the **Goddesses** had created this kind of existence. It was very complicated, but it was also very simple; it was very simple, but it was very hard to decipher, he could not analyze it at all.

He only knew the name of that magic.

The person who was laughing happily—

No, he only knew those people's name.

Human

That was the name of the magic.

Human

That was the name of the magic.

And because this magic appeared, all of the tragedy began.

It was not clear who was the one who first created this magic.

But that person must have liked magic a lot, Ryner thought.

The power in Sion's body gnawed at Ryner ceaselessly as he watched at the very interesting, new magic that was expanding in front of him.

The magic that he could not see was ceaselessly multiplying.

This magic's name seemed to be called **Human**.

Then this **Human** continued, continued to multiply.

Human.

Human.

Human.

As if expanding to fill the whole universe, this formation called **Human** was expanding.

But, they weren't in this world.

They belonged in another universe.

They were multiplying ceaselessly in a different, unfamiliar universe, where Ryner, Sion and the **Goddesses** couldn't interfere.

But, although they could not interfere, the other party's power could bind Ryner.

Bind Sion.

Then,

"...Gu."

Sion's pained moan was heard.

No, because Ryner was one with Sion, so the one who let out the sound was he himself.

So Ryner raised his head in Sion's body.

"...Is it painful, Sion?"

He asked.

Then Sion replied.

"Give me power."

"Anyway, this magic is quite amazing..."

"Give me power."

"The person who created this magic must be very familiar with magic."

"Not enough. Give me more power. Enough power to deal with those people..."

But Ryner shook his head.

"You can't, Sion. We can't oppose this magic. You should know after using my power, right? Do you want to see again? Open your eyes. Open your eyes. Use my power."

So Sion opened his eyes.

Then Ryner gave his power to those eyes.

A tear shaped symbol appeared in those eyes, then they were able to see all equations in this world.

They were able to understand all the magic on this world.

They were able to give colour to this world, they were able to solve all equations.

But, using these eyes to see, still,

"...You can't destroy this magic called **Human**."

Ryner said.

Then he examined **Human** again. But this magic, the more he looked at it, the more incomplete it felt.

But at the same time, the more he looked at it, the more complete it seemed.

Then it was multiplying.

It was multiplying without any limits.

The power to multiply was similar to that of the **Goddess**—no, the basic formula was most likely the same—but the reason for multiplying was completely different.

The center of this structure was completely different.

Anyway, when multiplying, something called «Love» was needed.

According to the equation of «Love», they were multiplying.

But this thing called «Love» was something he could not understand.

It was clearly so simple, pure, easily destroyed, but for unknown reasons, he was unable to find the foundation to solving this equation.

He only wanted to touch, destroy this equation.

Every time he wanted to touch and destroy this equation «Love», he would get an inner feedback of the equations such as «Joy», «Mad», «Sad», «Care» and «Despair».

In the end, he wasn't able to analyse any of them.

He could touch the other party from this place.

So Ryner he,

"...This is really amazing..."

He sighed softly.

This equation called **Human** was too pretty, he couldn't help but sigh in admiration.

But this was repeated,

"Give me power. I will destroy this magic."

Sion said.

But Ryner said.

"This magic? Destroy such a pretty magic..."

"Give me power..."

"That, I can give you power... you can also devour my power... but in the current situation, it can't destroy this magic."

At this moment, Ferris spoke.

Behind Sion, the other half of Ryner spoke.

She used that emotionless face to look at him and said.

"...Why aren't you moving?"

So Ryner looked at Ferris.

Of course, to her, she was unable to see Ryner. Because Ryner had basically merged with Sion, her eyes couldn't see Ryner.

And the power of her eyes was near nil.

The power to see all equations was not left behind.

So she couldn't see.

She couldn't see how beautiful this magic was.

She couldn't see the power the unlimited, numerous **Human** was producing in a world completely different from this world.

And with the multiplication of **Human**, Sion's power was bounded even more tightly.

This magic traveled in his head.

This magic eroded his body.

The surroundings of Sion and Ryner who were almost one body, seemed to feel the impact from this **Human**.

No, this magic seemed to be a magic made for the removal of the Ryner—the **Lonesome Demon's** power.

"..."

He looked in the direction of the **Human**.

No, as if searching for the creator of the **Human**, he opened his eyes.

But in the equation for **Human**, there was no such thing written.

No, in all magic, there would always be the inscription of the creator's intentions and name, but he couldn't see it.

So Ryner narrowed his eyes.

"...Unless, the target of that magic is me?"

He said.

"But why would the target be me? I have always been living alone, I don't think anyone would know of my existence."

He said.

"Unless someone knew of my existence? They knew of my existence and they were waiting?"

He said, raising his head.

He looked at the sky that was no longer grey.

He looked at the world that was different from the world he had been trapped in, the outside world that was expanding outwards.

"...Then in the moment that I left, they used this magic... If that is the case, then I can understand why this magic: **Human** is so pretty. Because I completely can't imagine that this kind of magic was an impromptu creation. At least, I can't create it. But in this case, who is it? There should be no one who knows of me."

As he spoke, Ryner was losing his powers slowly. No, to be more accurate, the power that was used to interfere with the outside world was slowly flowing away.

So with Ryner as the center.

With his host, Sion as the center, a hole appeared around them.

With them as the center, a hole appeared in the middle of the world.

It was the same as the place that Ryner had dwelled in the past.

It was the same as the grey that had imprisoned Ryner.

With the increase of **Human**, the space continued to distort, contort and distort, then slowly it separated them from this world.

Ferris spoke.

She looked to this side and said.

"Our bodies are disappearing... What is happening?"

Following that, the **Goddess** known as the Goddess of Reincarnation, Milk Ephillet looked to them and said.

"...The **Goddesses** are using their magic to seal Sion in this place."

But towards this, Ryner laughed.

Looking in Milk's direction.

Looking at Milk's body.

Analysing all the equations making up Milk.

"... The magic of the **Goddesses**...? I don't think that the race of the **Goddess** can wield this much power to perform such a large-scale magic... But if it's like that, then who is the one who created this magic?"

He mumbled.

In this period of time, he was looking at **Human**.

He always was looking at **Human**.

Really, the more he looked at this magic, the more beautiful he thought it was.

If it was him who created it.

If he had to create a stronger, more pure magic, he would use such a beautiful structure.

If it was like that, it was as if...

It was as if...

"...It's as if I created it..."

Ryner said.

He looked into the distance.

He looked into the distance to the magic called **Human** that was used by someone.

Human had been born from the **Goddesses'** powers.

Using all of the **Goddesses'** powers, they had been born.

If this magic really was created by the **Goddesses**, then there was a possibility that there was a person who was excellent at magic and well-versed in it among the **Goddesses**.

An existence that was able to rival Ryner.

Possibly, a person who was able to surpass him and be more well-versed in magic.

But if that was like that now.

And if there was such a person standing on the **Goddess'** side

"I want to see him."

He said.

"When can I see him."

He said softly.

In this period of time, the power of **Human** was slowly, slowly binding him.

Binding Sion.

Sion was already in a situation where he couldn't talk.

Milk looked at him

"Ah ah~ In the end they lost."

She used a slightly disappointed voice to say.

But Sion was unable to respond. That was how strong the binding of the **Human** was.

Their vision slowly started to darken.

This sealing was stronger than the previous one.

It was a place darker, darker, darker than grey, it imprisoned Sion, Ryner, and Ferris.

But even so,

"..."

Ryner still smiled.

A faint smile appeared on his face.

Although no one could see him smiling.

Although he no longer had a physical body, he was only ceaselessly devoured by Sion's body, no one could see his smile, but he was still smiling.

Because he was no longer by himself.

Because this time, he wasn't alone.

Because even if he was trapped in a place this time, he wasn't alone.

He had a friend by his side.

Sion was by his side.

So,

"...Haha"

He laughed.

Then he looked at the darkness bearing down on his surroundings. He looked at the seal. He had not found a way to solve it. He had not found a way to destroy **Human**.

But,

"...I will find it"

He said.

"So Sion. Rest assured and enter the darkness."

He said.

"Then go and see him. Go to the person who created this magic. Go the person who created such a beautiful magic."

At this moment, everything was covered in darkness.

This seal was more cruel than he had thought.

This prison was too harsh.

There was no sound.

There was no scenery.

Even his body could not move.

Then the fear in Sion's heart was passed on to him.

Sion who only wanted to destroy, was trembling in fear.

But Ryner still smiled and said.

"Don't worry. It'll be alright. I'll be by your side."

"..."

"I will protect you. I will be by your side. Because you are my benefactor who helped me. Because you are my friend who saved me. So I will find a way out of this. I will find the way to attack and destroy **Human** and escape from this place."

"..."

"Then we'll go to the person who created **Human**. I wonder what kind of person he or she is? I really want to see that person."

"..."

"Then, you'll definitely say this. When you see that person you'll definitely say this. Something around the lines of destroying him or her. Wanting to destroy that person. Because you have only been thinking of this. But I will follow you. I will follow your wishes. Because I like you."

"..."

Just like that, Ryner continued to talk ceaselessly.

He continued to talk to Sion, who felt fearful.

But Sion didn't reply.

Bu even so, that was fine.

Because he was no longer alone, he didn't feel lonely.

So Ryner didn't stop talking to his friend.

"I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Sion."

"..."

"I'm sorry I spent such a long time. Really, how long have we spent in here? A thousand years, or two thousand. But because the both of us are here, so it's not lonely. At least I'm happy to be with you, I'm happy."

"..."

"I'm almost there. I can almost find the method to counter this. Just, give me some time..."

"..."

"...Probably, that's Love. That part about Love is the most important. Sion thinks so too, right? Love is the most important. But I don't know what Love is, I don't know what exactly this thing Love is, so I have not been able to master it."

"..."

"But if it's like this, then what do I do? The feeling of liking you is not until the stage where Love can be felt... If it's like that, what do I do. How should I destroy **Human**. There is no Love in my body. There is no Love in your body too. If it's like that, what do we do."

"..."

"What should we do to create Love?"

"..."

"How can I, who only knows Loneliness and you who only knows Destruction, create Love, what do we do?"

Then Sion looked to him.

No, in actuality, he did not turn his face. Because Ryner was in Sion's body, so Sion could not turn to look at Ryner.

But Sion's consciousness turned to him.

There was no expression.

Just, seeing a slightly lonely face.

Ryner looked at him.

Then asked.

"...Are you angry?"

"..."

"Because I completely can't find a method to get out of here, so you are almost going to get angry?"

At the time he asked this, Sion suddenly replied him.

"...No. I just feel that it is good to have you by my side. Because if you were not here, I might have gone mad."

Ryner looked at Sion and then laughed in embarrassment.

"That's really..."

He said.

"I'm happy."

He said.

Although Sion didn't react, but Ryner still laughed happily, then he started to analyse again.

He started to analyse **Human**.

How long had he spent on that, he was not clear.

How long had he spent there, he could not remember.

Although he was not clear, but Ryner spoke.

"...Hey, Sion."

"Wu?"

"I have decided to give up on destroying this thing called **Human**."

"Then what do we do?"

"I am going to make something that will link **Human** together."

"..."

"Create a medium using Love that will link with **Human**, basically this will an eroding kind of magic."

"..."

"And although we don't have this thing called Love, but this magic will have Love."

"..."

"And then it will cry as it erodes the enemy. Although **Human** is a beautiful magic, the magic that we will create will be very sad."

"...Can you make that already?"

"Eh."

"Then, let's begin."

"You won't regret?"

"Regret?"

"Eh."

"Why would I regret? I want to leave here, I want to destroy everything."

"Ha ha, there's still that."

"I want to destroy everything."

"Destruction. But, although you say that now, you will regret it."

"..."

"Because this magic is too sad, so you will regret it."

"..."

"Because this magic is too lonely, so you will regret it."

"..."

"Because even we will be affected by this magic."

"..."

"We will be infected with Love. Not only **Human**, even we will be infected with it."

"..."

"Even so, you won't regret it?"

Ryner said.

Then Sion replied.

"I cannot understand what you are saying."

"Ahaha."

"So create that magic."

"Eh."

"Create that magic that will be able to rip apart this world."

"Eh. Alright. Then you and I will both regret this together."

"..."

"We will regret this from the bottom of our hearts."

"..."

"Until today, we do not have feelings so we can tolerate it, because we didn't know what Love was so we could tolerate it... But after today, it will be different."

"..."

"But, this might be good too. Becoming the first divinities to know what Love is, let the two of us crumble. But this might be good too. As long as I'm not alone."

"..."

"Then, I'm starting. I'm going to activate the magic."

"Ah ah."

"I understand. Then, expanding the magic. Combining our powers—use a magic that can erode **Human**, no, can erode everything in this world."

Saying this, Ryner activated the magic.

It was complicated.

It was pure.

It was simple.

Then it gave birth to a magic that was so tender that it was sad.

That magic's name was.

No, his name was—**Human α**.

There was only one created.

There was only one person created.

Even though all of Sion and Ryner's powers had been created, there was only one **Human** who had the power of α.

But inside it, was Love.

There was a larger Love than what **Human** possessed injected in it.

Then this Love started to spread.

It was as if it eroded the people it touched.

It was as if it eroded the people connected to him.

It was as if it made the people around him mad, that Love started to spread.

So this **Human α** was born.

He was born in this universe that was filled with **Humans**.

But the darkness wasn't cleared completely.

The darkness sealing Sion wasn't cleared completely.

So Sion said.

"...What is it?"

Then Ryner replied.

"Quickly."

"..."

"He will quickly—**Human α**—will dominate that world."

He said.

Looking at the sky.

He looked at the sky.

He was only a baby who had just been born and was still drinking milk, but he was no longer crying.

He only looked at the sky dazedly.

"...What a strange child."

A woman who seemed to be the mother said.

He didn't know why he could understand what this woman was saying. So he opened his mouth. He wanted to say something.

But,

"Ah—Wu—"

He could only release that kind of sound.

Mother looked at him tenderly again.

"Ahaha, you're complaining that you were called a strange child?"

"Ah—Ah—"

"Ah ah, really, how adorable~"

Then he was kissed.

In that moment, something in the woman's heart changed. From his own body, something started to infect the woman's body, changing her equation.

At this moment, a man spoke. It was a young man who seemed to be around the same age as Mother.

This person seemed to be his father. That man was peeking at him. Father, too, was immediately infected.

"Ah, has he awoken? But this fellow completely doesn't cry."

Mother's eyebrows creased slightly,

"Really, don't call him that."

"Ah, sorry. Then what do we call him?"

"Baby."

"We can't call him baby forever. We have to come up with a name for him quickly too."

Father said.

"...I didn't think we would have triplets... I only thought of a name for one person."

"Ai, is that so?"

"Eh."

"What name is it?"

"The baby boy will be called Ryner."

"Then the girl?"

"Ferris."

"Wu~ rarely heard names. Is there any reason?"

"...Ai? That, something like I thought about it suddenly?"

"Ai—Ma, that's fine. Then let's use those names for the first two that were born."

"Is that alright?"

"Because those are the names you came up with, the children will definitely be happy with them."

"Aha, is that so?"

"Ah ah."

"But if it's like that, then what about this child? This child's name will be picked by you."

Mother said this, then Father revealed a troubled expression.

"I'm not very good at this."

"Quickly."

"Give me a night."

"Come on~"

She said.

Then the Father looked towards this side, he looked tenderly towards this side.

"Then, call him Sion."

"Sion?"

"Ah ah."

"Does it mean anything?"

"I suddenly thought of it?"

"Really~"

But this was also completely planned for.

It had been planned so that Love could be used.

The child called Sion that was drinking milk looked to his side.

On his right was a black haired boy.

On his left was a blond girl.

These two were crying noisily, they were extremely noisy.

Noisy.

Although they were noisy, but he didn't know why but he felt that those voices were very warm.

He felt that those cries filled up the loneliness in his heart. So he,

"Ah—"

Laughed too.

He laughed happily.

He laughed innocently.

Then from the bodies of his siblings.

From the parents in front of him, he felt something like Love.

He felt Love blossom in his heart.

"..."

In this moment, he felt that his memories were rapidly receding. He became unable to understand what his parents were saying.

He only wanted to shout.

He was here.

He was born here.

He had Love.

He had a strong Love, as if wanting to announce that he had been born here, he cried.

Just like that, **Human α** appeared in the **Human** world.

So **Human α** appeared in the **Human** world.

So **Human α** appeared in the **Human** world.

So **Human α** appeared in the **Human** world, but—

"..."

In the next moment, his vision became red.

At first, Sion did not know what that red colour was.

But, he saw Father's throat was stabbed with something like a rod. Then he saw red blood spurting from the throat.

Then Mother noticed this too. She wanted to cry, but she immediately clasped her hand over her mouth.

"Why are the soldiers of Boliar Kingdom here..."

She said quietly with an expression as if she were about to cry. Then she carried Sion, Ryner, and Ferris in her arms, thinking to escape with them.

But she was only able to do so much.

The thing that was like a rod was thrown again and injured her shoulder.

"Wu."

She let out a soft moan. Her arm lost strength and Ryner fell.

Sion watched everything.

He saw the figure of the baby rolling on the floor.

He saw the figure of his brother.

Ryner was crying. He was on the floor, crying desperately.

But Mother could not go and pick up Ryner.

Because the enemy had already reached Ryner's side. The men emanating a killing intention stood in front of Ryner.

Those people were looking in this direction, shouting "Kill! Kill!".

Although he didn't know why those people would want to kill him, but those men shouted "Kill! Kill!" without stopping.

Ferris was crying.

She was crying noisily like she had just now.

"Don't cry!"

Mother shouted.

Then she ran.

She ran in order to escape those men.

Then those men laughed.

"Kill everyone in this country! Don't let that woman escape! Fire the arrows!"

They laughed as they shouted this.

They prepared something like that rod, then threw the arrows in this direction. Mother's head was pierced through. Blood spurted. Then he felt momentarily dizzy.

Because Mother had collapsed.

Then Sion fell on the ground.

Ferris fell on the ground.

They were immediately discovered by the enemy.

Because the two of them were crying noisily.

They were crying noisily and strongly, as if using their bodies' strength.

But one of the voices had disappeared.

It was Ryner.

Ryner's voice had disappeared.

Sion looked in that direction and saw a man standing by Ryner. The man was holding something that was shining, that thing was stained with red.

Then Ferris' voice disappeared too.

He looked to Ferris.

He saw the same scene.

Then those men holding the silver things stained with red looked to him.

Then they said.

"What is wrong with this one."

"He's not crying."

"Did he die because of the impact of the fall?"

"Then let's head to the next one?"

They talked messily.

It seemed like he had managed to escape this.

The men started to retreat.

Sion closed his mouth, looking at them.

Looking at the people who killed his family.

Looking at the **Humans** who had killed his important family members.

"..."

He wanted to saw something.

"..."

He wanted to say something, but suddenly a man spoke.

"...You can't be merciless. This one hasn't died yet."

Then the silver thing was in front of Sion's chest.

He immediately knew that that thing could steal his life away. He immediately knew that the important part of his body would be stabbed.

He wanted to cry.

But,

"..."

He could no longer make a noise.

He was already dead.

His life ended just like this.

He was unable to do anything.

He was unable to leave anything behind, his life had disappeared just like this.

So the magic that he had used—

The number that he had successfully spread <Love> to was only two people.

The world turned like this.

Times changed.

A thousand years passed without anything happening.

The world was reset and then reactivated again.

Like a deceiving painting.

Like a maze.

It looked as if there was progress, but actually it was meandering around the same point.

Like an idiot repeating itself, repeating itself, repeating itself ceaselessly, everyone was wandering in the same area.

There was no change.

Humans were still so ugly.

Humans were still so beautiful.

Humans were still so sad.

Humans had not decreased in number.

But even so, the **Hero** and the **Demon** did not give up. One day, they would defeat the curse that the **Goddesses** had created, taking back their world.

Sion awoke,

In this world, eight people loved him.

Then he died.

Sion awoke,

In this world, seventy-four people loved him.

Then he died.

Sion awoke,

In this world, six hundred sixty-six people loved him.

Then he died.

But between all of this that happened, there was no complete link. The previous Sion had a different character and soul, it was a completely different person with a different personality.

There were times where he was born as a boy, there were other times where he was born as a girl too.

Only when the **Humans** in the Roland district had fulfilled the conditions, then he would become the first **Human α**. Then he would lose his name and inherit the name Sion.

It was as if there was someone controlling all of this.

It was as if someone was playing with fate, Sion sought love from other people, he sought ceaselessly, sought ceaselessly, involving other people in his fate.

Then the people who loved him, in that moment became the enemies of this world.

It wasn't wrong, right?

Because this world was something that the **Goddesses** had made.

Because this world was filled with **Human**. It was created by the **Goddesses**, so those who loved **Human α**, were betraying this world.

But slowly, slowly, Sion found a method to progress.

Loved by the **Humans**.

Loved by the people.

Then constructing a country.

That country's name was called the Roland Empire. Through the country, even if he died, love would still remain. The people and future generations of this country would submit to the generations of kings descended from him, they would always carry love.

So eventually, the magic would be complete.

The magic to destroy the magic of the **Goddesses** would be complete.

The name of the king of that time, was still Sion.

The people who completed the magic would completely lose their own name and inherit the name Sion.

So in order to inherit the name Sion, in order to possess everything, they had fought desperately and finally gained the world.

In that period of time, they had believed that there was hope in front of them. Because that was what God had commanded.

Because the urge in his body and the voice of God was always saying, progress, progress, progress is justice.

But he didn't know why that the end of the road ahead of him, was only darkness.

So that day.

That night.

That night where he finally gained everything.

Why did it become like this?

Ryner had said with a voice that was almost crying.

"..."

Sion couldn't reply.

At that time, Ryner was a female. As Sion's childhood friend, the two of them had finally fallen in love. They had walked together as if it were natural, the two of them had fought to change the world.

They didn't know that they were actually under the influence of someone else, desperately fighting.

They didn't know that their lives, and other people's lives, were under the influence of someone else, he and she had desperately fought to progress.

Finally they had gained the world.

Trusting that if they did this, everything would progress smoothly, they had killed everyone else, kill, and finally gained the world.

But.

"..."

There was nothing at the end of their road.

The only heard the order from God.

From the God that controlled him—from the Hero—from the Demon, there was a command.

The command was like this.

«Come, devour all of the things that you love, complete this magic.»

The order was like this.

«Come, devour all that you love, destroy the magic of the Goddesses.»

In the moment that the order came, Sion's body became strange.

In the moment that the command came, Sion's consciousness was stained with black.

Then, devour.

He devoured his subordinates, citizens, the people who believed in him, devoured, devoured.

Then the magical formation appeared.

The huge magical formation that was large enough to cover the sky appeared.

That magical formation could destroy the world.

It could destroy this locked world.

It could destroy the world and curse that the **Goddesses** had created.

For this, Sion continued to eat people.

Devoured.

Devoured.

Human disappeared.

Comrades disappeared.

Family disappeared.

Citizens disappeared.

The magical formation slowly swelled.

But.

But, Sion was shouting.

"I wasn't born here in order to do these!"

Sion shouted in a voice as if he were about to cry.

"I didn't fight till today to do these!"

But his voice couldn't reach.

It couldn't reach the God.

Because the God was not interested in **Humans**.

Towards the **Humans** that had been a kind of magical formation, the God had no interest.

So Sion could only devour **Humans**.

He could only devour his comrades.

Finally, there was nothing left in his surroundings.

The only one left was Ryner.

It was only the girl who was his childhood friend left.

It was only his wife left.

She cried as she watched Sion.

She watched Sion who could not stop devouring the world.

"...This is, this is...the reason for our existence?"

She said.

A tear shaped insignia appeared in her eyes.

She was also a marionette. The God called the **Demon**—no, the marionette controlled by the monster.

Then, eat her. Hearing this kind of order. This way, the magic will be complete. This way, the magic to destroy this world will be complete.

And if this is not done, this world will self-destruct. Everything will disappear, everything will return to square one, and it will repeat itself again.

So, eat.

Eat.

Eat.

Eat.

Then changed the world...

"You're noisy!"

Sion roared.

He desperately suppressed the urge to rush over to Ryner. He knelt on the ground and desperately suppressed it.

Ryner watched this sadly. She used an expression as if she was about to cry to watch this. Because there beautiful eyes could see through all of this, so she had understood that no matter how she resisted, she could not change anything.

She looked at Sion, then turned to look at the sky. But there were no more stars in the sky. Because this world was already starting to collapse. Because when

the **Humans** were devoured, when the curse of the **Goddesses** had been destroyed, this world had started to disappear.

So she looked at the darkness.

She looked at the darkness that held nothing, then she closed her eyes and said.

"...It's alright, eat me."

"...Shut up."

"There is no other way. Kill me."

Ryner said.

But Sion shook his head.

"No!"

He shouted.

So Ryner cried and laughed.

"But this already can't be stopped."

"You're noisy."

"And, I don't want to betray my comrades again. Look at that equation. This is not the first time. We have already repeated the same thing..."

"Shut up."

"If you don't eat me here, the same thing will happen again?"

"..."

"But the experience of that time will no longer be me, nor you."

"..."

"But I don't want to have the same memories of suffering."

Ryner said.

And Sion understood her feelings.

Fighting, fighting, fighting at the price of losing many priceless things, and the answer gained in the end was that he himself had no particular worth to exist, how can there be something so ridiculous.

Something like that.

Anyway, no matter what, the ending would not change, perhaps ending everything here would be the best.

"..."

But Sion did not think it that way.

At least now, in here, he could not be like a controlled marionette, and kill her without his own consciousness.

Because he loved her.

Because he had fought until today to protect her.

But he had to kill her?

Because the God that had made him had commanded that, so he had to kill her?

"Ha, haha, how can there be something so ridiculous."

Sion said with a trembling voice.

He desperately tried to resist the order, he used a voice that sounded as if he were about to cry to say that.

Ryner tried to approach him. Every time she took one step closer, the urge in his body would swell.

Eat, eat, eat.

The magic buried deep in his body swelled.

Eat, eat, eateat, eat, eat, eateat, eat, eat, eateat, eat, eat, eateat, eat, eat, eateat, eat, eat, eat, eat, eat.

"Don't come over here!"

Sion shouted.

"Don't come near me!"

Sion desperately shouted.

But Ryner didn't listen to him. She only used that warm expression she always had, walking slowly to his side, then hugging him tightly.

Her body was extremely soft.

He wanted to devour her body very much, as if he were mad.

But he resisted it.

No, it should be that he was cursing.

He cursed this world and he cursed the God that had written this silly script.

He used his anger and his cursing to collapse the urge to devour her.

Then Ryner said again.

"Aren't you going to kill me...?"

"..."

"But if it's like that, then the same thing will happen again."

"..."

"Kill me."

"..."

"Come, kill me. This way, will we be released."

"..."

"I beg you, kill me..."

Towards what Ryner said, Sion replied.

Only one sentence.

"...No."

So Ryner clutched his chest and cried.

Then,

"Really, why did it become like this?"

She said.

But Sion didn't know too.

Was it because he was foolish.

Was it because he was weak.

But he felt that these two weren't the reasons, so he wasn't able to reply.

You like me.

I like you too.

That was clearly enough.

But why did it become like this.

Why did that darkness expand without stopping?

Sion ignored the urge in his body, studying his surroundings.

But his surroundings, apart from darkness was darkness, the road ahead was filled with darkness.

The two of them had no other ways.

And the two of them knew it.

The light could no longer return.

But, even so.

"..."

Ryner said.

She raised her face.

She raised her tear-stained face and spoke to Sion.

"...If we reincarnate the next time"

"Eh."

"You'll have to kill me."

"Eh."

"Or else, something like this will happen again."

"Eh."

"Because this...this is too cruel."

"Eh."

"You'll have to kill me, alright?"

"Eh."

".....Liar. You clearly wouldn't do it."

"Eh."

"I like you."

"I like you, too."

"Then kill me."

But,

"..."

Sion was unable to reply, so she cried again.

"Because I like you, so I can't kill you."

"Idiot."

"Eh."

"You really are an idiot."

"Yes."

Sion said that and then he hugged her tightly.

But her body was starting to fade.

It was time.

If he didn't devour her here, and complete the magic, then they would not be able to open the way out of this world created by the **Goddesses**, they would not be able to leave here.

Of course, Sion's body started to fade too.

Their surroundings were already covered with darkness, 1000 years had passed, the world started to reset.

So in those last moments of her life, she said again.

"You promised."

"..."

"Kill me."

"..."

"I'm begging you."

"..."

"Ne. You promised. You have to..."

"..."

Her words stopped there.

Then she disappeared with that sad expression.

Until the end, Sion had been unable to respond to her words.

You promised.

To kill me.

She had said that.

But, he was unable to do that.

Killing the person that he loved dearly, that was impossible.

So he could only curse the God.

Why had he created something like this.

Why had he created everything.

Kill him, he had thought.

If he was here.

If God truly existed, if that voice was able to reach them, I will kill you. He had cursed.

But the words of the curse did not reach the God's ears in the end.

No, it wasn't heard by anyone.

Because he was about to vanish.

Because he was about to vanish in that moment.

Then he disappeared.

He faded away with her.

Then the world started to collapse.

The cycle started again.

In this cycle, would he be able to make the right decision properly?

Would he be able to choose to kill her?

In the end, it was something he was unable to do.

But if that was the case.

If that was the case, that what should we do?

"Is there any way for the God that played us like fools... Is there any way to get rid of that monster?"

He always thought of this, until the end, he disappeared.

Then the next cycle started again.

The next cycle started again.

The next cycle started again, as it should be...

And that was what happened in the past world.

Coincidentally, it was what happened in the previous incarnation of the world.

It was the matters that occurred exactly one thousand years ago.

This was what occurred in the last cycle in this world that would reset itself after one thousand years.

This was a plain.

It was desolate plain where there was nothing here.

In the center of the land, there was a black-haired man sitting there. He had his usual sad face, a pair of unmotivated eyes, tired and a little depressed.

Someone called his name.

"Ryner."

Someone called his name in that manner.

So Ryner turned around and looked in that direction and said.

"Ah, it's Sion."

Sion looked at Ryner's expression and asked,

"Are you alright?"

Ryner laughed. He laughed as if amused.

"What is it?"

He asked in return.

Sion looked at the empty land and muttered,

"Asking me what..."

He looked at the Central Continent that was void of everything and said,

"...Everything here"

He turned to the person sitting in the middle of the desolate plain with an expression of sadness and said that.

Ryner only looked at him steadily,

"..."

He didn't say anything.

He only laughed like that.

He laughed as if it were forced.

So Sion spoke again.

He spoke to this Demon that was scared of Loneliness.

He wanted to ask this Demon that was scared of Loneliness that was smiling like a clown.

"...Are you blaming me."

And Ryner replied.

"Why should I blame you?"

"Then, do you regret it?"

"..."

"Do you regret it?"

Ryner shrugged, not replying.

He was now sitting on a desolate piece of land with no life growing from it.

Aside from him, there was no one else.

He who had lost everything, was very lonely. It had always been like that. Everything around him had been filled with loneliness, covered with the darkness. So he had carried an expression of sadness, allowing himself to sink in that loneliness.

Sion asked.

He asked Ryner who was sitting by himself in the wilderness.

"...Where's Ferris?"

Ryner narrowed his eyes, pointing his finger in front of him. He pointed to a girl's figure that was lying some distance in front of him.

Sion looked at her and asked again.

"...Is she dead?"

Ryner only nodded his head.

"...Did you kill her for me?"

"..."

"All of this is my fault, right?"

"...It's not your fault."

"But."

"Alright, shut up. It's not your fault."

"..."

Sion was silent.

Ryner clearly had an expression as if he was about to cry, but he still put forth that foolish smile.

There was nothing in this plain.

No, actually there was nothing in this world.

So Sion was looking at the face of the only friend left here—

He looked at Ryner.

"..."

Then he looked in the other direction of the plain.

On that side, there was a broad desert. On the other side of the plain, there was a large desert that seemed to be limitless.

That was the place where all this had arose from.

That was the ending point of all of this.

Sion looked at the land of beginning and ending, and spoke to the only one who remained in this world.

"What do you think?"

"What is it?"

"Do you think there is something that can be done on the other side."

"You obviously know that."

"...Ah, you're right. I do know."

Definitely, there could be nothing done. To reach here, there had been many sacrifices made.

All of his friends and family were used as offerings, so that he could reach here.

No, Ryner even had to kill his own wife.

Sion looked at Ferris who was lying on the land. Even after death, she was still beautiful, as if she were only sleeping.

But she was dead.

Ryner had devoured her power.

That was the power he had devoured so that he could present it to Sion. Only, even if Sion received this power, he probably couldn't do anything.

With Sion's power, there was no way to stop the overwhelming despair that was swelling in front of his eyes.

Their decision was wrong.

The decision they had made to reach here was wrong.

"So it's really all my fault."

So Sion said the words that blamed him.

Ryner raised his head to look at him, using that face that was slightly sleepy.

"I already said it's not your fault. You have worked hard."

"Haha."

"It's just that we did not have enough power."

"Hahaha."

"End this. We have lost."

"Haha...ha, I can't laugh anymore."

Sion frowned. His tears of laughter were about to flow out, but even so that had lost its meaning.

The end of the world was approaching.

Darkness was already by his side.

Twilight was approaching.

Sion looked at the surrounding darkness and said,

"...Ryner"

"Eh?"

"I want to eat you."

Hearing this, Ryner shrugged as if it were expected,

"I had killed Ferris because of this."

"Ah ah."

"Then, do it. I'm tired."

"Ah ah."

"But I think you should know it, even if you eat me, you don't have any chances of winning? This world is about to disappear."

"I know."

"Then, why do you still work hard?"

He lowered his head to look at Ryner, look at this friend who always looked sleepy but had always fought on his side from the beginning, Sion smiled slightly.

"I'm not going to fight. I want to make a curse."

"Curse?"

"Eh. A curse that will mark the signs of our existence. A curse that will mark down all the love and hate that we experience when we are born on this world. I don't want to follow the orders of those mad Gods. I want to make a curse that will make them regret making us, manipulating and imprisoning us."

Sion said.

Hearing his words, Ryner still smiled. He seemed to happily smile, like an idiot.

"...Your personality is truly wicked."

"Haha."

"Even if you do that, will anything change?"

"Who knows. But I don't want to die so meaninglessly."

Hearing this, Ryner laughed again.

"Like a spoiled child."

"We have been together since youths, it's not like it started now?"

"That's true."

At this moment, Sion reached out to Ryner. Ryner grabbed his hand and stood up. The two of them stood together and looked at the tall sky together.

But the sky was no longer that far away.

Because everything was starting to collapse.

The two of them raised their heads and talked.

"Then, do it."

"Ah ah."

"Sion."

"Eh?"

"I'm very happy that I was able to be with you."

Sion turned to look at him. Ryner was still smiling, like expected. Although they had sacrificed everything to reach this stage, he was still smiling.

Even though there was nothing happy that he could smile at.

There was nothing worth being happy, but Ryner still smiled at him and said that he was very happy to be here.

So Sion nodded his head and replied.

"Me too."

"Then, I'll go first."

"Ah ah."

"Devour me."

"...I understand."

Then everything ended.

Ryner collapsed on the ground.

He was dead.

There was only him left on this world.

But Sion didn't care about this anymore. Because his friend was with him. His friend's power was in his body.

So he maintained a mourning expression and moved his hands.

He started to construct a magical equation without looking back.

A magical equation made of light.

He used the knowledge he had just gained from Ryner to desperately construct the magical equation.

Within it, he weaved a curse.

Within it, he weaved anger, hate, and love.

It was a curse that seemed to show **Humans** itself.

It was a curse that seemed to be made by a **Human** to make **Humans**.

Finally, this curse was completed.

Just as the darkness that was creeping over from the desert was about to devour everything, it was completed.

Sion looked at the curse and muttered,

"...I'm really the worst."

The curse that he had made needed him as a sacrifice so that it would activate.

After this curse was activated, he would be released from this **Human** container and become a different curse. If he became that, he would never die.

He would suffer forever, he would forever, forever be wailing.

Even though he wanted to shout that he did not want to die, it was too late now. Because that Death, his body was already transferred to a different place.

For this curse, he had gathered all the souls of his comrades', no, it should be his comrades' strength and finally managed to complete such a huge curse.

But even so,

"... I want to curse. I want to curse to world. Or else, there would be no meaning to our lives!"

He yelled, alone.

"We have clearly struggled, cried, and shouted to reach this step... But they have to disappear as if they were a gear made by someone, I will not allow this. I will not allow this ending where everyone is treated like trash, made to be used."

He laughed. He laughed with a mourning face, alone.

"I will leave my claw marks. I will leave a wound in the middle of you bastards' perfect plans with our dirty, cursed souls."

The darkness neared.

The darkness was nearing.

Actually, it was already time for even Sion's existence to be erased as scheduled, and for the next world to begin its rebirth.

"I won't let all matters progress according to what you want... I won't be killed."

Sion used the magic.

Sion activated the curse.

The curse mixed his own soul in it, at the same time, he could feel that his comrades' souls were taken in as well.

In that moment.

A wail sounded.

His comrades' wails.

The feelings of the **Humans** trapped in his body, all this was rewritten by the curse. The souls wailed together.

This wail would never vanish.

Even though the darkness from the desert had reached them and surrounded them, it would definitely not fade away.

It couldn't fade away. Because this curse had been made so that it would not fade away. According to this eternal pain, it would never disappear, so it had been made to be.

So in this desolate plain, only this wail continued to spread.

"Ha, hahaha."

Sion laughed.

"Hahahahahahaha."

Sion cried.

"Ahah
ah
hah
ah
ha."

He laughed madly. Finally, he himself had turned into the curse.

But the wail did not vanish.

Pain, despair, love, hate, all of them did not disappear.

He would forever pace in this prison, struggling to survive.

But the world had disappeared.

The next cycle was about to begin.

The next cycle started.

But the curse actually remained.

It was different from the present one.

His.

Sion's.

No, all of their wails, had left some scars in this scheduled world.

Sion Astal woke up.

He was in the bedroom beside his office.

It was only that, although he had opened his eyes, he didn't feel a sense of reality. In the period of time he had lost his consciousness recently, there was always someone's consciousness mixing up his mind continuously, so even now he was not sure of which world he was in.

He lifted himself up and studied his surroundings.

It was only a narrow room with a bed.

It wasn't a plain where the darkness was expanding.

At this moment,

"...Plain?"

He mumbled softly.

Why had he compared his room with a plain, he couldn't understand.

His memory of the dream was very messy, his current self was unable to remember all of them clearly. The only one he remembered was that he had seemed to see the dreams of trillions of humans from unknown origins.

As if hearing that, those innumerable humans wailed.

"...What I saw, should have been the memories of **the Fallen Dark Hero**, Asruld Roland, right?"

He softly said.

No matter what, he didn't have much of an impression of the content of those dreams.

He only remembered that he had seen those dreams.

And there were some other matters that he had understood.

Like, about this world, it was following a schedule to proceed.

Like, about the reason of the rising of that darkness in this world.

And why Roland was a country like this?

Why did the world become something like this?

Why was the world this dirty.

About this, there were several leads. No, actually, during these two years with Lucile, they had conducted a detailed research.

Ryner's report.

The Heroes' Relics.

The research left from Lieral Lieutolu.

The secret of the demon hidden in the Eris family.

And the memories of Asruld Roland stirring in his own body.

Lately, all of this matters had been mixed up. But with the progress of the investigation, some matters that were unknown slowly linked these matters up together.

"..."

Sion raised his head. He looked at the darkness in this room that was slightly dark because there was no light.

In here.

In this darkness, it was filled with a curse that a person had cast in the past because he had to.

Although this curse had a slight effect, but it actually twisted the structure of this world.

And because of this.

"...Because of this, I don't want to devour Ryner."

Sion mumbled.

If he devoured Ryner, then Ryner would forever be trapped in this darkness.

Then, what should he do?

Kill him?

If he killed him, then another **Ryner** would be born. If that happened, then there was no need to devour Ryner, he would just need to devour that newborn fellow. If it was an opponent who would not let him feel any love or friendship, then devouring him would be an easy matter.

Because, wasn't he accustomed to the matter of stepping on others in order to progress?

But before he reached here, before he reached this step where he was now.

"—I."

He did not know how many times he had stepped on others in order to walk to this stage.

If it was the reason, then that was too obvious.

The reason was because there was no choice but to progress.

Stepping on others and making them collapse, the justifiable reason of having no choice but to proceed, whatever was needed would be given.

Even though it was only like that, it was something that could not be forgiven.

He thought of the words in Ryner's report.

Towards a world where everyone will not lose anything. Towards a world where everyone can laugh happily and have afternoon naps.

"...It doesn't exist."

Sion muttered weakly,

"That world cannot be created..."

At least, he himself had no right to create that world.

That was what he thought.

But Ryner still believed in him. He said that he was the Hero King. He said that he was an excellent king, he said he wanted to help him.

But he himself did not deserve to be a **Human** that was loved so. No, actually he was no longer **Human**.

"...I am going to devour you, Ryner."

He said softly.

"You will become my stepping stone, falling into the endless pain, whereas I will continue moving."

He said softly.

"I clearly devoured comrades and betrayed them, but I'm still highly regarded. Isn't this ridiculous?"

He said this, but he didn't laugh.

He only steadily looked into the empty air.

"..."

At this moment, voices started talking from the office beside him.

"Are~, that fellow Sion is not here."

It was Ryner's voice.

Then a woman's voice replied,

"Wuwu. Then, in the time before he returns to prepare, let's play a prank?"

"Hey, aren't you saying this too early? He might be in the bedroom beside the office?"

"Mu? Then should we be softer?"

"Too late."

The two of them conversed.

Sion paid attention to the voices beyond the door. Then he frowned. He really didn't know how he should face them. Those two had always been so bright-eyed, they had always always believed in him.

Towards their feelings, as a traitor himself how should he face them—

But at this moment.

"Hey Sion! Are you here!"

As Sion was mentally preparing himself, the door burst open with a bang. Ferris appeared in front of him. She looked at him with clear blue eyes, then she closed the door with a bang.

"Hey Ryner."

"What is it."

"Like what you said, that person was really there."

"Eh."

"We should have been quieter."

"So I told you it was too late."

"Idiot. There is nothing too late in this world. First, let's apply glue to the door and make it stick so that he wouldn't be able to open it?"

"Oh, that sounds interesting... But Ferris."

"Say it."

"Your voice is not soft at all."

"Oh no! Alright, then let's glue it well before Sion comes out!"

Ferris said loudly.

Because it was too amusing, Sion couldn't resist and laughed. The gloomy and depressing atmosphere from earlier had been dissipated by these two amazing people.

"...If they don't do something like that, then I might as well give up everything, ne."

He sighed.

At this moment, he saw a liquid substance flow in between the crack of the bed and door.

"Hey, your actions are really cruel."

Sion jumped up from the bed and reached out to grab the door handle and said,

"I going to open the door!"

Ferris replied,

"Try it!"

Then, lastly, Ryner...

"Nonononono, wait, I'm at the door, if you open it you'll hit my head... Hey Ferris! Why did you push me..."

"If you can open it, then open it!"

"Waaaaaiiiiiitt, I told you if you open it, you'll hit my head..."

He only spoke until half-way, anyway Sion had already simply opened the door. So Ryner's head was immediately struck by the door with a bang.

"Yyyyyyyyyyyyyeeeeaaaaaa."

He let out a cry and collapsed on the ground. Ferris and Sion looked at him and said together.

"What are you doing."

"I've had enough of the two of yoooooooouu."

Hearing Ryner's loud shout, Sion turned and walked to the office desk. Like usual, the work that needed to be completed had piled up.

But this wasn't about the interior affairs of the country. The notices in the country about the conquering of Estabul and the redistribution of the authority of the nobles had been almost completed. Although it wasn't a complete ending, but this world had nothing called perfect.

And the world where the time spent with Ryner and Ferris laughing was already...

"...Hey Ferris."

"Eh?"

"Let's go and eat dangos, what do you think? I'll pay."

Towards Sion's offer, Ferris turned her head around. She would definitely happily say let's go... Although that was what he had thought, but in reality Ferris looked at him in suspicion.

"Is this a trap again!?"

She shouted.

"That again. You said that there was something urgent to do or else the Wynnit Dango store would be demolished!"

She had actually said that. And Ryner who was on the floor beside them was secretly escaping from the room. He felt that after those words, the work would definitely be pushed to him.

So Sion laughed.

"What is this, you don't trust me~"

Hearing this, Ryner looked at him and said,

"Have you done anything that is worth believing in up till today?"

Ferris too,

"You dango enemy. Enemy of the world."

So Sion laughed. They actually did not believe in him, if he really allowed them to eat dango and did not give them work, these two would really be grateful, it seemed.

But he himself wanted to express his gratitude by doing this at the end. He wanted to sincerely thank them for being by his side all this time. He wanted to say thank them for accompanying scum like him.

"..."

But, forget it.

Anyway when they left, he would treat them to a large favour like usual. If he wanted to warmly praise them at the end of the end, that thinking was too despicable.

So he laughed.

"Ma, then according to what the two of you said, I will arrange work for you."

"I kneeeewww iiiiittt"

"But there's no choice since I've been exposed. Come and work."

As he said that, Sion reached out and pulled a large pile of work over.

Ryner looked at him with an expression of annoyance.

Ferris thought for a while and said,

"Ah, that. Sion said he wanted to eat dango, I also suddenly want to eat dango—which is a uncommon thing."

Ryner who was sprawled on the floor, preparing to sleep said,

"Hey, aren't you the one who always talks about eating dango all the time."

"Wuwu. Almost eighty, ninety percent of my time is spent on that."

"Over-eating."

Sion spoke,

"Then, if Ryner and I start now, we would have no choice but to work for five days and five nights."

"Heeeeeeeey I didn't hear of that!!"

"Go buy some dango that can make people work hard and energetically even though they are working overnight~"

"Wuwu. Leave that to me."

"So I said I didn't hear anything like that! And how can there be dangos that make people feel fine even though they are working overnight!"

"What did you say? You bastard, you are looking down on dangos, huh!"

"Huh? Why did this turn to that- Don't unsheathe your sword aaaaaahhh!"

Ryner was sent flying. Lowering her head to look at him, Ferris said, satisfied,

"Then, I'm going."

"Alright, take your time~"

She left the office like this. Only Sion and Ryner were left.

Ryner collapsed on the floor, pretending to be knocked out. Sion flipped his documents and said,

"Hey, Ryner."

"..."

"The place you're sleeping on now seems to be the place where the two of you were messing around with the glue earlier?"

"Ai?!"

"Ah, as I thought, you didn't faint."

"Oh no! I was tricked!"

"No no, the part about the glue was true."

"Ai, what if they're not to my tastes."

"Alright, ask them to help you prepare the clothes."

Ryner shrugged and walked out of the room. Sion watched him leave.

Only he was left.

"...Working for five days and nights..."

He said softly.

Actually, there was no need for them to work for that long. The work that this country needed was basically almost completed.

What was left was to proceed to the next step. Start the plans for the next stage. But he still said he needed to work for five days. Although he could go and change everything today.

Although he had to progress today, but he still wanted to remain here for five days.

Because Ryner and Ferris were here.

He wanted to stay with them for a longer time.

"But, five more days. Only five days... And then, this will end. After that, I will proceed..."

Ryner returned.

Sion smiled.

Ferris returned too.

Sion smiled.

Like usual, there would be no change.

Although this was the last time.

This was the last five days, but everything was still the same.

Working hard.

Ryner was grumbling.

Ferris was eating dangos.

Looking at this, Sion laughed.

Then he thought.

This must be a dream too.

Such a perfect world could not exist.

So looking at this dream, he himself had no courage to proceed.

So he couldn't continue dreaming.

He couldn't obsess with these wishes.

If he was absorbed in this happy bliss for too long, he would be unable to move.

These times slipped away in a moment.

Five days passed, the dawn was welcomed by the night.

The location was the roof of the Roland Palace.

Ryner had said that his head was aching from overworking and he wanted to breathe a breath of fresh air, and then it had become like this.

Ryner looked at the streets below the city. Those streets were starting to be stained with red.

The sun rose, the dawn was approaching.

Looking at the rising sun, Ryner he.

Ryner Lute said.

"...It looks like... Everything looks like it's from a dream."

Then he turned around.

Ryner looked at Sion, using those usual sleepy eyes. Tired eyes. But those eyes looked at Sion trustingly.

Sion looked at him.

He looked at Ryner.

Then.

"..."

He was determined to progress.

**The story after this, will be continued in Densetsu no Yuusha no Densetsu
Volume 11—**

«End of Sion Note»